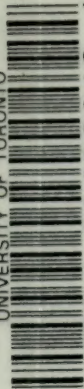



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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN:

HIS

AUTOBIOGRAPHY;

WITH A NARRATIVE OF

HIS PUBLIC LIFE AND SERVICES

BY REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

WITH NUMEROUS DESIGNS BY J. G. CHAPMAN.

NEW YORK:

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## P R E F A C E.

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BRILLIANT military deeds write their own history. Their sound strikes upon the ear, and challenges the attention of mankind. The sympathy of men with what is daring in courage and glorious in arms, makes all a soldier's countrymen his eulogists; and the hero usually receives more, rather than less, than his meed of praise. He has comrades, too, bound to him by a community in his sufferings and a partnership in his victories. Upon the follower the glory of the leader is reflected; and each follower, watchful of the fame of his leader, is ever ready to celebrate far and wide the glory of the achievements—

“All which he saw, and part of which he was.”

Every soldier in an army, every man who has borne arms during a war, has his private family of admirers, and by these are the reputation of the officers—the representatives of the soldiers—extended, until the widening circle of praise embraces a nation. The successful soldier's apotheosis anticipates his death. The next generation endorses his deification, and in process of time—very short process too, as our national history may witness—oral tradition places the soldier on an elevation to which the biographer finds it very hard work to *write up*.

But statesmen and ambassadors, particularly those who move in such spheres as Franklin, owe small thanks to their cotemporaries. By their very position they are unable to vindicate themselves without injury to the public service; and although to them may be honestly due the praise of the Wise Man—"He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city"—they must look to posterity for justice. And posterity has not, as in the case of the warrior, the echo of cotemporary praise to bias its judgment in their favor. A nation hears of the advance of an enemy, and looks with gratitude to the opposing soldier from the moment that he buckles on his armor. Whatever be the result, joy in a victory, satisfaction in a repulse of the invader, or sorrow in defeat, the people can appreciate the valor, successful or unsuccessful; which opposed the foe. But the diplomatist, from the necessity of the case, works in the dark. His acts must be judged without the apparent cause and full justification of the open counter-movements of adversaries; for, as he strives against covert machinations, so must the motives of his operations be hidden. Even success in such a contest is without eclat. Defeat brings unqualified condemnation. When the point aimed at is gained, the successful statesman is not unfrequently the subject of detraction. Where the soldier finds applause in the verdict of his companion in arms, the statesman receives faint praise from his colleagues, if, indeed, he be not compelled to defend his course and motives before the public against associates who honestly differed from him. He, then, who writes the life of a statesman, has



not, as in the life of the warrior, merely to prepare an endorsement of public opinion. He has to wind a difficult path amid political prejudices, or to be content with only a portion of his countrymen for readers.

From these causes the political character of Franklin has suffered; not, indeed, by any charges affecting the integrity of the man; for, if there were such, they were disproved in his lifetime, and set aside as the merest ebullitions of personal enmity or party spleen. To the latest hour his countrymen strove with each other in doing him honor, and his last years were passed in the harvesting of his laurels. But his fame as a politician has lost in this wise: that writers, finding in the public mind a general admiration of the man, when they came to justify it by particulars, found themselves in a dilemma. It was not that there are not particulars enough, for there is a superfluity—capital sufficient for a dozen great reputations—but because these particulars are not *all* available with *all* men. There are no battle-fields in his story; and in the days when those who acted with him were alive, to have celebrated his acts of diplomacy would have been to wake up counter-memorials to the public. Therefore, because the history of cabinets offers less popular reading than the history of battle-fields, and because Franklin could not be elevated as a great politician for *all* to admire, his biographers celebrated his electrical discoveries. All acknowledged him great; but because all readers would not say *ay* to his statesmanship, he was cried up exceedingly as an economist. As a natural philosopher and as a fireside sage, the digester

of the minor morals into a code of every-day ethics; as the man with the kite, and as Poor Richard with an almanac full of wise saws, he is celebrated; while his arduous, unremitted, and unrewarded labors for his country have really served no other purpose for his fame than as a balance to keep up the symbolic kite before the world.

A Morris in the Exchequer was as indispensable to his country as a Washington in the field. A Franklin abroad was as useful as an army at home. Now diplomatist, now broker, now banker, now commissary, and now judge in Admiralty, now commercial agent, and now plenipotentiary—a Caleb Quotem abroad—to-day closeted with kings, and to-morrow with newspaper editors; now arguing with ministers, and now writing for the people, he was indefatigable. He filled a place which no other man of his time could have filled. Few thanked him for it living, though all assented to *general* and *indefinite* praise. Few have done him justice since.

It is the aim of this biography, without approving every act in the life of Benjamin Franklin, and without impugning the motives, unnecessarily, of those who differed from him, to show that he carried the industry and aptness of the printer's boy into the atmosphere of courts; that he labored incessantly for his country; that he labored honestly. He dared to trust posterity with his fame, by neglecting to set himself right before captious cotemporaries at a time when to have appeared *too* American would have been to jeopard the cause he labored to promote. With other points of his character the public have long been familiar, and it is trusted that



this book may lead the way to his juster appreciation as a statesman. Free and diligent use has been made of his writings as collected by that most indefatigable historian and biographer, Mr. Sparks.

The author of this book has not bestowed praise where he thought it unmerited, or labored to present his subject as a perfect man. While he has not withheld censure where impartiality demands it, he has not deemed it necessary to repeat forgotten and unfounded charges merely to disprove them. It is hoped that candor will approve what a desire to be candid has dictated.

No descendant of Franklin bears his name, though the descendants of his daughter are numerous. They are justly proud of the reputation of their ancestor, but his fame is the national pride. There would seem in his case, as in that of his friend George Washington, a guard thus set against the claim, by a family, of what was meant for a nation, as neither in his life "gave to a party what was meant for mankind."





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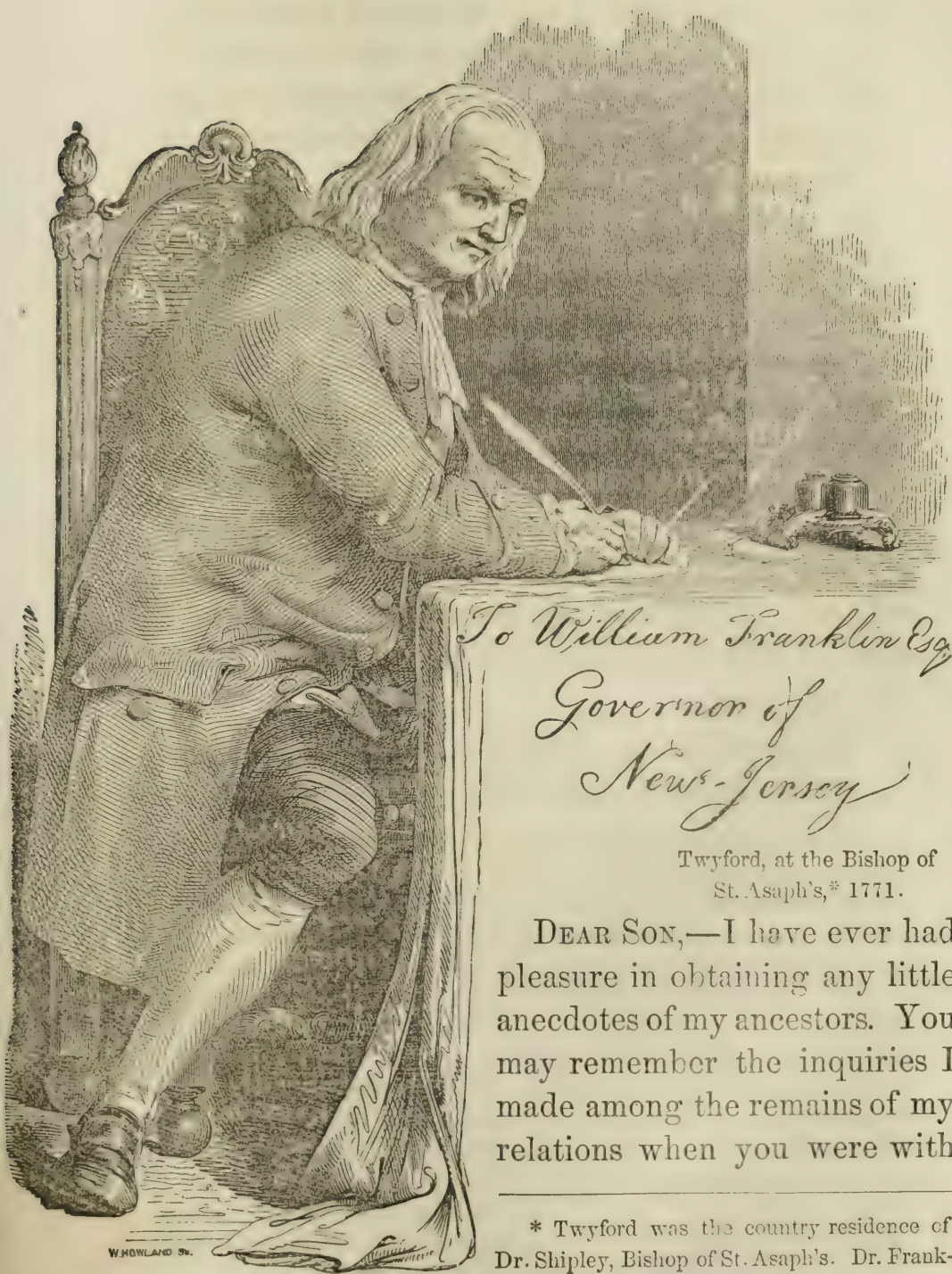
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*To William Franklin Esq  
Governor of  
New-Jersey*

Twyford, at the Bishop of  
St. Asaph's,\* 1771.

DEAR SON,—I have ever had  
pleasure in obtaining any little  
anecdotes of my ancestors. You  
may remember the inquiries I  
made among the remains of my  
relations when you were with

---

\* Twyford was the country residence of  
Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph's. Dr. Frank-

me in England, and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to learn the circumstances of *my* life, many of which you are unacquainted with, and expecting the enjoyment of a few weeks' uninterrupted leisure, I sit down to write them. Besides, there are some other inducements that excite me to this undertaking. From the poverty and obscurity in which I was born, and in which I passed my earliest years, I have raised myself to a state of affluence and some degree of celebrity in the world. As constant good fortune has accompanied me even to an advanced period of life, my posterity will perhaps be desirous of learning the means which I employed, and which, thanks to Providence, so well succeeded with me. They may also deem them fit to be imitated, should any of them find themselves in similar circumstances.

This good fortune, when I reflect on it, which is frequently the case, has induced me sometimes to

lin was in the habit of calling Dr. Shipley "The Good Bishop." He became introduced to him while in Europe, as agent for several of the colonies, and in this year, 1771, paid two visits to Twyford. Dr. Shipley was one of the few in the House of Lords who opposed from the first the course pursued by the British government in relation to North America. He published some poems and sermons, and some writings in reference to the colonial dispute. He died in 1788; and Dr. Franklin, in a letter of condolence to his daughter, writes: "His departure is a loss, not to his family and friends only, but to his nation and to the world; for he was intent on doing good, had wisdom to devise the means, and talents to promote them. His sermon before the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and '*his Speech intended to be Spoken*,' are proofs of his ability as well as his humanity. Had his counsels in those pieces been attended to by the ministers, how much bloodshed might have been prevented, and how much expense and disgrace to the nation avoided!"



say, that if it were left to my choice, I should have no objection to go over the same life from its beginning to the end: requesting only the advantage authors have, of correcting in a second edition the faults of the first. So would I also wish to change some incidents of it for others more favorable. Notwithstanding, if this condition was denied, I should still accept the offer of recommencing the same life. But as this repetition is not to be expected, that which resembles most living one's life over again, seems to be to recall all the circumstances of it; and, to render this remembrance more durable, to record them in writing.

In thus employing myself, I shall yield to the inclination so natural to old men, of talking of themselves and their own actions; and I shall indulge it without being tiresome to those who, from respect to my age, might conceive themselves obliged to listen to me, since they will be always free to read me or not. And, lastly (I may as well confess it, as the denial of it would be believed by nobody), I shall perhaps not a little gratify my own *vanity*. Indeed, I never heard or saw the introductory words "*Without vanity* I may say," &c., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter, wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others who are within his sphere of action: and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to

thank God for his *vanity* among the other comforts of life.

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I attribute the mentioned happiness of my past life to his divine providence, which led me to the means I used and gave the success. My belief of this induces me to *hope*, though I must not *presume*, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to him only in whose power it is to bless us, even in our afflictions.

Some notes which one of my uncles (who had the same curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relative to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that they lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, on a freehold of about thirty acres, for at least three hundred years, and how much longer could not be ascertained.\*

This small estate would not have sufficed for their maintenance without the business of a smith, which had continued in the family down to my

\* Sir John Fortescue, chief justice of the King's Bench in the time of Henry VI., in his famous work, "*De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*," written in 1412, speaks of wealthy freeholders as commonly called Franklins. Chaucer and Spencer both speak of the country gentleman as a Franklin; and the name was probably assumed as a surname when the fashion of surnames came up. The name Franequelin or Franqueln is found in France, and may be traced back as far as 1521, and even to the century before.



uncle's time, the eldest son being always brought up to that employment; a custom which he and my father followed with regard to their eldest sons. When I searched the registers at *Ecton*, I found an account of their marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, as the registers kept did not commence previous thereto. I, however, learned from it that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he was too old to continue his business, when he retired to Banbury, in Oxfordshire, to the house of his son John, with whom my father served an apprenticeship. There my uncle died and lies buried. We saw his gravestone in 1758. His eldest son Thomas lived in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now lord of the manor there. My grandfather had four sons, who grew up: viz., Thomas, John, Benjamin, and Josiah. Being at a distance from my papers, I will



give you what account I can of them from memory: and if my papers are not lost in my absence, you will find among them many more particulars.\*

Thomas, my eldest uncle, was bred a smith under his father; but, being ingenious, and encouraged in learning (as all my brothers were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal inhabitant of that parish, he qualified himself for the bar, and became a considerable man in the county; was chief mover of all public-spirited enterprises for the county or town of Northampton, as well as of his own village, of which many instances were related of him; and he was much taken notice of and patronized by Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, on the 6th of January, four years to a day before I was born. The recital which some elderly persons made to us of his character, I remember, struck you as something extraordinary, from its similarity with what you knew of me. "Had he died," said you, "four years later, on the same day, one might have supposed a transmigration."

John, my next uncle, was bred a dyer, I believe of wool. Benjamin was bred a silk dyer, serving an apprenticeship in London. He was an ingenious man. I remember, when I was a boy, he came to my father's in Boston, and resided in the house with

\* Among Dr. Franklin's papers was found a letter from his father, dated Boston, May 25th, 1739: "As to the original of our name there is various opinions; some say that it came from a sort of title of which a book, that you bought when here, gives a lively account. Some think we are of a French extract, which was formerly called Franks; some of a free line, a line free from that vassalage which was common to subjects in days of old; some from a bird of long red legs."

us for several years. There was always a particular affection between my father and him, and I was his godson. He lived to a great age. He left behind him two quarto volumes of manuscript, of his own poetry, consisting of fugitive pieces addressed to his friends.\* He had invented a short-hand of

\* These volumes are now in the possession of Mrs. Samuel Emmons, of Boston, great-granddaughter of their author. The thoughts of the writer run chiefly on moral and religious subjects; and the pieces embrace many acrostics, as the names of his friends and connections, and other pieces addressed to them on various occasions. The following lines were sent to his *namesake*, and were probably elicited by some juvenile performance of the future philosopher. They were prophetic:

“’Tis time for me to throw aside my pen  
When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men.  
This forward Spring fortells a plenteous crop;  
For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top!  
If plenty in the verdant blade appear,  
What may we not soon hope for in the ear!  
When flowers are beautiful before they’re blown,  
What rarities will afterward be shown!  
If trees good fruit un’noculated bear,  
You may be sure ’twill afterward be rare.  
If fruits are sweet before they’ve time to yellow,  
How luscious will they be when they are mellow!  
If first years’ shoots such noble clusters send,  
What laden boughs, Engedi-like, may we expect in the end!”

Benjamin Franklin, the philosopher’s uncle, died in Boston in 1728, leaving one son, Samuel, the only survivor of ten children. This son had an only child, a son, referred to in the text, as living in 1771. He died in 1775, leaving four daughters. It may be here remarked, that there is not now a male descendant of Dr. Franklin’s grandfather living who bears the name of Franklin. Dr. Franklin’s eldest son, to whom this autobiography was addressed, left one son, William Temple Franklin, who died without issue. His second son, Francis Folger, died in childhood. His daughter, Sarah, married Richard Bache in 1767, and their descendants are numerous, six out of seven marrying: viz., Benjamin Franklin Bache, who married Margaret Marcoe; William, who married Catharine Wistar; Deborah, William J. Duane; Richard, a daughter of Alexander J. Dallas; Sarah, Thomas Sergeant.

his own, which he taught me, but, not having practiced it, I have now forgotten it. He was very pious, and an assiduous attendant at the sermons of the best preachers, which he reduced to writing according to his method, and had thus collected several volumes of them. He was also a good deal of a politician; too much so, perhaps, for his station. There fell lately into my hands, in London, a collection he made of all the principal political pamphlets relating to public affairs, from the year 1641 to 1717; many of the volumes are wanting, as appears by their numbering, but there still remain eight volumes in folio, and twenty in quarto and in octavo. A dealer in old books had met with them, and knowing me by name, having bought books of him he brought them to me. It would appear that my uncle must have left them here when he went to America, which was about fifty years ago. I found several of his notes in the margins. His grandson, Samuel Franklin, is still living in Boston.

Our humble family early embraced the Reformed religion. Our forefathers continued Protestants through the reign of Mary, when they were sometimes in danger of persecution on account of their zeal against popery. They had an English Bible, and to conceal it, and place it in safety, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the cover of a joint-stool. When my great-grandfather wished to read it to his family, he placed the joint-stool on his knees, and then turned over the leaves under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to



give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the Bible remained concealed under it as before. This anecdote I had from Uncle Benjamin. The family continued all of the Church of England till about the end of Charles the Second's reign, when some of the ministers that had been outed for their non-conformity holding conventicles in Northamptonshire, my Uncle Benjamin and Father Josiah adhered to them, and so continued all their lives: the rest of the family remained with the Episcopal Church.

My father married young, and carried his wife with three children to New England, about 1685. The conventicles being at that time forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed in their meetings, some considerable men of his acquaintance determined to go to that country, and he was prevailed with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy the exercise of their religion with freedom. By the same wife my father had four children more born there, and by a second wife ten others, in all seventeen; of whom I remember to have seen thirteen sitting together at his table, who all grew up to years of maturity, and were married; I was the youngest son, and the youngest of all the children except two daughters. I was born in Boston, in New England.\*

\* The public Register of Births in Boston, still preserved, dates Dr. Franklin's with January 6th, 1706. This is Old Style, and, according to our present calendar, is the same as January 17th. It appears by the

My mother, the second wife of my father, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his ecclesiastical history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*, as "a godly and learned Englishman," if I remember the words rightly. I was informed he wrote several small occasional works, but only one of them was printed, which I remember to have seen several years since. It was written in 1675. It was in familiar verse, according to the taste of the times and people, and addressed to the government there. It asserts the liberty of conscience in behalf of the Anabaptists, the Quakers, and other sectaries that had been persecuted. He attributes to this persecution the Indian wars, and other calamities that had befallen the country, regarding them as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense, and exhorting the repeal of those laws, so contrary to charity. This piece appeared to me as written with manly freedom and a pleasing simplicity. The last six lines I remember, but have forgotten the preceding ones of the stanza; the purport of them was, that his censures proceeded from good-will, and, therefore he would be known to be the author.

"Because to be a libeler (said he)  
I hate it with my heart ;

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record of the Old South Church, opposite which building his father then lived, that he was baptized the same day. The early years of Franklin were spent in a house corner of Hanover and Union streets, to which his father removed shortly after his birth.

From *Sherburne*\* town, where now I dwell,  
 My name I do put here ;  
 Without offense your real friend,  
 It is Peter Folger."†

My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar-school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me, as the tithe of his sons, to the service of the Church. My early readiness in learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read), and the opinion of all my friends, that I should certainly make a good scholar, encouraged him in this purpose of his. My Uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me his short-hand volumes of sermons to set up with, if I would learn his short-hand. I continued, however at the grammar-school rather less than a year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class of that year to be at the head of the same class, and was removed into the next class, whence I was to be placed in the third at the end of the year. But my father, burdened with a numerous family, was unable, without inconvenience, to support the expense of a college education ;

\* *Sherburne*, in the island of Nantucket.

† The pamphlet is well described by the doctor. It was entitled "A Looking-glass for the Times ; or, the Former Spirit of New England revived in this Generation." The preceding lines of the stanza above quoted are :

"I am for peace, and not for war,  
 And that's the reason why  
 I write more plain than some men do  
 That use to daub and lie.  
 But I shall cease, and set my name  
 To what I here insert," &c.



considering, moreover, as he said to one of his friends in my presence, the little encouragement that line of life afforded to those educated for it, he gave up his first intentions, took me from the grammar-school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownwell. He was a skillful master, and successful in his profession, employing the mildest and most encouraging methods. Under him I learned to write a good hand pretty soon, but failed entirely in arithmetic. At ten years old I was taken to help my



father in his business, which was that of a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler; a business to which he was not bred, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, because he found that his dyeing trade, being in little request, would not maintain his family. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wicks for the candles, filling the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, &c.

I disliked the trade, and had a strong inclination

to go to sea, but my father declared against it; but, residing near the water, I was much in it and on it. I learned to swim well, and to manage boats; and when embarked with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally the leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, though not then justly conducted.

There was a salt-marsh which bounded part of the mill-pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much trampling, we had made it a mere quagmire. My



proposal was to build a wharf there for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near

the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone home, I assembled a number of my play-fellows, and we worked diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, till we had brought them all to make our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones which formed our wharf. Inquiry was made after the authors of this transfer; we were discovered, complained of, and corrected by our fathers; and, though I demonstrated the utility of our work, mine convinced me that *that which was not honest could not be truly useful*.

I suppose you may like to know what kind of a man my father was. He had an excellent constitution, was of a middle stature, well set, and very strong: he could draw prettily, and was skilled a little in music; his voice was sonorous and agreeable, so that when he played on his violin and sung withal,





as he was accustomed to do after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had some knowledge of mechanics, and, on occasion, was very handy with other tradesmen's tools; but his great excellence was his sound understanding and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. It is true, he was never employed in the latter, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances keeping him close to his trade: but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading men, who consulted him for his opinion in public affairs, and those of the church he belonged to, and who showed a great respect for his judgment and advice: he was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table, whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind, so that I was brought up in such a perfect inattention to those matters as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me. Indeed,

I am so unobservant of it, that to this day I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner of what dishes it consisted. This has been a great convenience to me in traveling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites

My mother had likewise an excellent constitution: she suckled all her ten children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness but that of which they died, he at 89, and she at 85 years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble over their grave, with this inscription :

JOSIAH FRANKLIN,

and

ABIAH his wife,

lie here interred.

They lived lovingly together in wedlock  
fifty-five years.

And without an estate, or any gainful employment,  
By constant labor and honest industry,  
(with God's blessing),  
maintained a large family comfortably,  
and brought up thirteen children and seven grandchildren  
reputably.

From this instance, reader,  
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,  
And distrust not Providence.

He was a pious and prudent man ;  
She a discreet and virtuous woman.

Their youngest son,  
In filial regard to their memory,  
Places this stone.

J. F. born 1655, died 1744, Ætat 89.

A. F. born 1667, died 1752, Ætat 85.\*

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\* In 1827, by the voluntary contributions of a large number of citizens

By my rambling digressions, I perceive myself to be grown old. I used to write more methodically. But one does not dress for private company as for a public ball. Perhaps it is only negligence.

To return: I continued thus employed in my father's business for two years, that is, till I was twelve years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married, and set up for himself at Rhode Island, there was every appearance that I was destined to supply his place, and become a tallow-chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father had apprehensions that if he did not put me to one more agreeable, I should break loose and go to sea, as my brother Josiah had done, to his great vexation. In consequence, he took me to walk with him, and see

of Boston, an obelisk of granite, twenty-one feet high, resting on a base two feet high, was placed over the grave of the parents of Franklin in the cemetery, General H. A. S. Dearborn pronouncing an appropriate address. On one side is the word FRANKLIN in large bronze letters, and beneath it is a bronze tablet, on which Dr. Franklin's original epitaph is inscribed. Beneath that are the following lines:

"The marble tablet  
 Bearing the above inscription  
 Having been dilapidated by the ravages of time,  
 A number of citizens,  
 Entertaining the most profound veneration  
 For the memory of the illustrious  
 Benjamin Franklin,  
 And desirous of reminding succeeding generations  
 That he was born in Boston, A.D. MDCCVI,  
 Erected this  
 Obelisk  
 Over the graves of his parents.  
 MDCCCXXVII."



joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, &c., at their work, that he might observe my inclination, and endeavor to fix it on some trade or profession that would keep me on land. It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been often useful to me to have learned so much by it as to be able to do some trifling jobs in the house when a workman was not at hand, and to construct little machines for my experiments, at the moment when the intention of making them was warm in my mind. My father determined at last for the cutler's trade, and placed me for some days on trial with Samuel, son to my Uncle Benjamin, who was bred to that trade in London, and had just established himself in Boston. But the sum he exacted as a fee for my apprenticeship displeased my father, and I was taken home again.

From my infancy I was passionately fond of reading, and all the money that came into my hands was laid out in the purchasing of books. I was very fond of voyages. My first acquisition was Bunyan's works in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections*; they were small chapmen's books, and cheap, 40 volumes in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read. I have often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was resolved I should not be bred to divinity. There was among them Plutarch's Lives,

which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called an *Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called an *Essay to do Good*, which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made a great progress in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I had now access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my chamber the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening to be returned in the morning, lest it should be found missing.

After some time a merchant, an ingenious, sensi-

ble man, Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, frequented our printing-office, took notice of me, and invited me to see his library,



and very kindly proposed to lend me such books as I chose to read. I now took a strong inclination for poetry, and wrote some little pieces; my brother, supposing it might turn to account, encouraged me, and induced me to compose two occasional ballads. One was called *The Lighthouse Tragedy*, and contained an account of the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters: the other was a sailor's song, on the taking of the famous *Teach* (or Blackbeard) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in street-ballad style; and when they were printed, my brother sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold prodigiously, the event being recent, and having made a great noise. This success flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by criticizing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. Thus I escaped being a poet, and probably a very



bad one : but as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how, in such a situation, I acquired what little ability I may be supposed to have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another, which disputatious turn, by-the-way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice ; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, it is productive of disgusts and, perhaps, enmities with those who may have occasion for friendship. I had caught this by reading my father's books of disputes on religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and, generally, men of all sorts who have been bred at Edinburgh.

A question was once, some how or other, started between Collins and me, on the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, having a greater plenty of words ; and sometimes, as I thought, I was vanquished more by his fluency than by the strength

of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters on a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the subject in dispute, he took occasion to talk to me about my manner of writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which he attributed to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method, and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to my manner of writing, and determined to endeavor to improve my style.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With that view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should occur to me. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted

a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual search for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales in the Spectator, and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered many faults and corrected them; but I sometimes had the pleasure to fancy that, in particulars of small consequence, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. The time I allotted for writing exercises and for reading was at night, or before work began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house, avoiding as much as I could the constant attendance at public worship which my father used to exact from me when I was under his care, and which



I still continued to consider as a duty, though I could not afford time to practice it.

When about sixteen years of age I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconvenience, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother that if he would give me, weekly, half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying of books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which was often no more than a biscuit or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins, or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, I had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that clearness of head and quicker apprehension which generally attend temperance in eating and drinking.

Now it was that, being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed learning when at school, I took Cocker's

book on Arithmetic, and went through the whole by myself with the greatest ease. I also read Seller's and Sturny's book on Navigation, which made me acquainted with the little geometry it contained; but I never proceeded far in that science. I read about this time Locke *on the Human Understanding*, and the *Art of Thinking*, by Messrs. du Port Royal.



While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's) having at the end of it two little sketches on the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procured Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, wherein there are many examples of the

same method. I was charmed with it, adopted it, dropped my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer; and being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, made a doubter, as I already was in many points of our religious doctrines, I found this method the safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took delight in it, practiced it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced any thing that might possibly be disputed, the words *certainly, undoubtedly*, or any others that gave the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather said, *I conceive* or *apprehend* a thing to be so and so; it *appears to me*, or *I should not think it so or so*, for such and such reasons; or *I imagine it to be so*; or *it is so, if I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning and sensible men would not lessen their



power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat most of those purposes for which speech was given to us.

In fact, if you wish to instruct others, a positive and dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may occasion opposition and prevent a candid attention. If you desire instruction and improvement from others, you should not, at the same time, express yourself fixed in your present opinions. Modest and sensible men, who do not love disputation, will leave you undisturbed in the possession of your errors. In adopting such a manner, you can seldom expect to please your hearers, or obtain the concurrence you desire. Pope judiciously observes,

“Men must be taught as if you taught them not,  
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.”

He also recommends it to us

“To speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence.”

And he might have joined with this line that which he has coupled with another, I think, less properly,

“For want of modesty is want of sense.”

If you ask, Why less properly? I must repeat the lines,

“Immodest words admit of no defense,  
For want of modesty is want of sense.”

Now, is not the *want of sense* (where a man is so unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his *want of modesty*? and would not the lines stand more justly thus?

"Immodest words admit *but* this defense,  
That want of modesty is want of sense."

This, however, I should submit to better judgments.

My brother had, in 1720 or 1721, begun to print a newspaper. It was the second that appeared in America, and was called the *New England Courant*. The only one before it was the *Boston News-Letter*. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough for America.\* At this time (1771) there are not less than five-and-twenty. He went on, however, with the undertaking. I was employed to carry the papers to the customers after having worked in composing the types and printing off the sheets.

He had some ingenious men among his friends, who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gained it credit and made it more in demand, and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them; but, being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would

\* The doctor makes a slight mistake. The second newspaper in Boston was "The Boston Gazette," of which, however, his brother was at first printer, and it commenced in 1719. In 1721, on the 7th of August, his brother commenced the *New England Courant*. He continued it till February 11th, 1723, in his own name, when, as stated in the text, that of Benjamin was substituted; and, although Benjamin removed from Boston in a few months after, his name was continued upon the paper until its close in 1727. James moved to Newport, and established the *Rhode Island Gazette* in 1732, which paper is still in existence.

object to printing any thing of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and, writing an anonymous paper, put it at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found in the morning, and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that they were not really so very good as I then believed them to be.\*

Encouraged, however, by this attempt, I wrote and sent in the same way to the press several other pieces that were equally approved; and I kept my secret till all my fund of sense for such performances was exhausted, and then discovered it, when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance. However, that did not quite please him, as he thought it tended to make me too vain. This might be one occasion of the differences we began to have about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and, accordingly, expected the same services from me as he would from another, while I thought he degraded me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often

\* *Vide* Frontispiece.



brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favor. But my brother was passionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, thinking my



apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected. Perhaps the harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with the aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life.

One of the pieces in our newspaper on some political point, which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. He was taken up, censured, and imprisoned for a month, by the speaker's warrant, I suppose, because he would not discover the author. I too was taken up and examined before

the council; but, though I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice, who was bound to keep his master's secrets.

During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper; and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavorable light, as a youth that had a turn for libeling and satire. My brother's discharge was accompanied with an order (and a very odd one), that "James Franklin should no longer print the newspaper called the New England Courant."

On a consultation held in our printing-office among his friends, what he should do in this conjuncture, it was proposed to elude the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother, seeing inconveniences in this, came to a conclusion, as a better way, to let the paper in future be printed in the name of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN; and in order to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, he contrived and consented that my old indenture should be returned to me, with a discharge on the back of it, to show in case of necessity; and, in order to secure to him the benefit of my service, I should sign new indentures for the remainder of my time, which was to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; however, it was immediately executed, and the paper

was printed, accordingly, under my name for several months.

At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon as one of the first *errata* of my life; but the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impression of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man: perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing-house of the town, by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refused to give me work. I then thought of going to New York, as the nearest place where there was a printer; and I was rather inclined to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party, and, from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case, it was likely I might, if I stayed, soon bring myself into scrapes; and further, that my indiscreet disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people as an infidel and atheist. I concluded, therefore, to remove to New York; but my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that, if I attempted to go openly, means would be used to prevent me. My friend



Collins, therefore, undertook to manage my flight.



He agreed with the captain of a New York sloop to take me, under pretense of my being a young man of his acquaintance, that had an intrigue with a girl of bad character, whose parents would compel me to marry her, and that I could neither appear nor come away publicly. I sold my books to raise a little money, was taken on board the sloop privately,



had a fair wind, and in three days found myself at New York, near three hundred miles from my home, at the age of seventeen (October, 1723), without the least recommendation, or knowledge of any person in the place, and very little money in my pocket.

The inclination I had had for the sea was by this time done away, or I might now have gratified it. But, having another profession, and conceiving myself a pretty good workman, I offered my services to a printer in the place, old Mr. William Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but had removed thence in consequence of a quarrel with the governor, George Keith. He could give me no employment, having little to do, and hands enough already; but he said, "My son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death; if you go thither, I believe he may employ you." Philadelphia was one hundred miles further; I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea.

In crossing the bay, we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger too, fell overboard; when he was sinking, I reached through the water to his shock pate, and drew him up, so that we got him in again. His ducking sobered him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desired I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite

author, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible. Honest John was the first that I know of who mixed narration and dialogue; a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were, admitted into the company and present at the conversation. De Foe has imitated him successfully in his *Robinson Crusoe*, in his *Moll Flanders*, and other pieces; and Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela*, &c.

On approaching the island, we found it was in a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surge on the stony beach. So we dropped anchor, and swung out our cable toward the shore. Some people came down to the shore, and hallooed to us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high, and the surge so loud, that we could not understand each other. There were some small boats near the shore, and we made signs, and called to them to fetch us; but they either did not comprehend us, or it was impracticable, so they went off. Night approaching, we had no remedy but to have patience till the wind abated; and, in the mean time, the boatman and myself concluded to sleep, if we could; and so we crowded into the hatches, where we joined the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray, break-



ing over the head of our boat, leaked through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest ; but, the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went to bed ; but, having read somewhere that cold water drunk plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, and sweat plentifully most of the night. My fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to go to Burlington, where I



was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day ; I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired ; so I

stopped at a poor inn, where I stayed all night, beginning now to wish I had never left home. I made so miserable a figure, too, that I found, by the questions asked me, I was suspected to be some runaway indentured servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown. He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and, finding I had read a little, became very obliging and friendly. Our acquaintance continued all the rest of his life. He had been, I imagine, an ambulatory quack doctor, for there was no town in England, nor any country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but he was an infidel, and wickedly undertook, some years after, to turn the Bible into doggerel verse, as Cotton had formerly done with Virgil. By this means he set many facts in a ridiculous light, and might have done mischief with weak minds if his work had been published; but it never was.

At his house I lay that night, and arrived the next morning at Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before, and no other expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday; wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town, of whom I had bought some gingerbread to eat on the water, and asked her advice. She proposed to lodge me till a passage

by some other boat occurred. I accepted her offer, being much fatigued by traveling on foot. Understanding I was a printer, she would have had me remain in that town and follow my business, being ignorant what stock was necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox-cheek with great good will, accepting only of a pot of



ale in return ; and I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going toward Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we rowed all the way ; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no further ; the others knew not where we were ; so we put toward the shore, got



into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at Market-street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes coming round by sea. I was dirty from my being so long in the boat. My pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no one, nor where to look for lodging. Fatigued with walking, rowing, and the want of sleep, I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted in a single dollar, and about a shilling in copper coin, which I gave to the boatmen for my passage. At first they refused it, on account of my having rowed; but I insisted on their taking it. Man is sometimes more generous when he has little money than when he has plenty, perhaps to prevent his being thought to have but little.

## CHAPTER II.

I WALKED toward the top of the street, gazing about till near Market-street, where I met a boy with bread. I had often made a meal of dry bread, and, inquiring where he had bought it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to. I asked for biscuits, meaning such as we had at Boston; that sort, it seems, was not made in Philadelphia. I then asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none. Not knowing the different prices, nor the names of the different sorts of bread, I told him to give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up









Market-street as far as Fourth-street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut-street and part of Walnut-street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market-street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go further.

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people



in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round a while and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when some one was kind enough to rouse me. This, therefore, was the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

I then walked down toward the river, and, looking in the faces of every one, I met a young Quaker man, whose countenance pleased me, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get a lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. "Here," said he, "is a house where they receive strangers, but it is not a reputable one; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show thee a better one;" and he conducted me to the Crooked Billet in Water-street. There I got a dinner; and, while I was eating, several questions were asked me, as, from my youth and appearance, I was suspected of being a runaway.

After dinner, my host having shown me to a bed, I laid myself on it without undressing, and slept till six in the evening, when I was called to supper. I went to bed again very early, and slept very soundly till next morning. Then I dressed myself as neat as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer's. I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, traveling on horse-



back, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who received me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately supplied with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and when we found him, "Neighbor," said Bradford, "I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one." He asked me a few questions, put a composing stick in my hand to see how I worked, and then said he would employ me soon, though he had just then nothing for me to do; and, taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, to



be one of the town's people that had a good will for him, entered into a conversation on his present undertaking and prospects; while Bradford, not discovering that he was the other printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him on by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what influence he relied on, and in what manner he intended to proceed. I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one was a crafty old sophister, and the other a true novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surprised when I told him who the old man was.

The printing-house, I found, consisted of an old, damaged press, and a small, worn-out font of English types, which he was using himself, composing an *Elegy* on Aquila Rose, before mentioned, an ingenious young man, of excellent character, much respected in the town, secretary to the Assembly, and a pretty poet. Keimer made verses too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to *write* them, for his method was to compose them in the types directly out of his head. There being no copy, but one pair of cases, and the *Elegy* probably requiring all the letter, no one could help him. I endeavored to put his press (which he had not yet used, and of which he understood nothing) into order to be worked with; and, promising to come and print off his *Elegy* as soon as he should have got it ready, I returned to Bradford's, who gave me a little job to do for the present, and there I lodged and dieted.

A few days after, Keimer sent for me to print off the *Elegy*. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

These two printers I found poorly qualified for their business. Bradford had not been bred to it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer, though something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of presswork. He had been one of the French prophets, and could act their enthusiastic agitations. At this time he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion; was very ignorant of the world, and had, as I afterward found, a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I worked with him. He had a house, indeed, but without furniture, so he could not lodge me; but he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, before mentioned, who was the owner of his house; and, my chest of clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read than I had done when she first happened to see me eating my roll in the street.

I began now to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading, with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly; and gained money by my industry and frugality. I lived very contented, and forgot Boston as much as I could, and did not wish it should be known where I resided, except to my friend Collins, who was in the secret, and kept it faithfully. At



length, however, an incident happened that occasioned my return home much sooner than I had intended. I had a brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware. He being at Newcastle, forty miles below Philadelphia, and hearing of me, wrote me a letter mentioning the grief of my relations and friends in Boston at my abrupt departure, assuring me of their good will to me, and that every thing would be accommodated to my mind if I would return, to which he entreated me earnestly. I wrote an answer to his letter, thanked him for his advice, but stated my reasons for quitting Boston so fully and in such a light as to convince him that I was not so much in the wrong as he had apprehended.

Sir William Keith, governor of the province, was then at Newcastle, and Captain Holmes, happening to be in company with him when my letter came to hand, spoke to him of me, and showed him the letter. The governor read it, and seemed surprised when he was told my age. He said I appeared a young man of promising parts, and therefore should be encouraged; the printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones; and, if I would set up there, he made no doubt I should succeed; for his part, he would procure me the public business, and do me every other service in his power. This my brother-in-law Holmes afterward told me in Boston, but I knew as yet nothing of it; when, one day, Keimer and I being at work together near the window, we saw the governor and another gentleman (who proved to

be Colonel French, of Newcastle, in the province of Delaware), finely dressed, come directly across the street to our house, and heard them at the door.

Keimer ran down immediately, thinking it a visit to him; but the governor inquired for me, came up, and with a condescension and politeness I had been quite unused to, made me many compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blamed me kindly for not having made myself known to him when I first came to the place, and would have me away with him to the tavern, where he was going with Colonel French to taste, as he said, some excellent Madeira. I was not a little surprised, and Keimer stared with astonishment. I went, however, with the governor and Colonel French to a tavern, at the corner of Third-street, and over the Madeira he proposed my setting up my business. He stated the probabilities of my success, and both he and Colonel French assured me I should have their interest and influence to obtain for me the public business of both governments; and as I expressed doubts that my father would assist me in it, Sir William said he would give me a letter to him, in which he would set forth the advantages, and he did not doubt he should determine him to comply. So it was concluded I should return to Boston by the first vessel, with the governor's letter to my father. In the mean time it was to be kept a secret, and I went on working with Keimer as usual. The governor sent for me now and then to dine with him, which I considered a great honor, more particularly as he

conversed with me in a most affable, familiar, and friendly manner.

About the end of April, 1724, a little vessel offered for Boston. I took leave of Keimer as going to see my friends. The governor gave me an ample letter, saying many flattering things of me to my father, and strongly recommending the project of my setting up at Philadelphia as a thing that would make my fortune. We struck on a shoal in going down the bay, and sprung a leak ; we had a blustering time at sea, and were obliged to pump almost continually, at which I took my turn. We arrived safe, however, at Boston in about a fortnight. I had been absent about seven months, and my friends had heard nothing of me ; for my brother Holmes was not yet returned, and had not written about me. My unexpected appearance surprised the family ; all were, however, very glad to see me, and made me welcome, except my brother. I went to see him at his printing-house. I was better dressed than ever while in his service, having a genteel new suit from head to foot, a watch, and my pockets lined with near five pounds sterling in silver. He received me not very frankly, looked me all over, and turned to his work again.

The journeymen were inquisitive where I had been, what sort of a place it was, and how I liked it. I praised it much, and the happy life I led in it, expressing strongly my intention of returning to it ; and, one of them asking what kind of money we had there, I produced a handful of silver, and spread





it before them, which was a kind of *raree-show* they had not been used to, paper being the money of Boston. Then I took an opportunity of letting them see my watch; and, lastly (my brother still grum and sullen), gave them a dollar to drink, and took my leave. This visit of mine offended him extremely; for, when my mother some time after spoke to him of a reconciliation, and of her wish to see us on good terms together, and that we might live for the future as brothers, he said I had insulted him in such a manner before his people that he could never forget or forgive it. In this, however, he was mistaken.

My father received the governor's letter with some surprise, but said little of it to me for some time. Captain Holmes returning, he showed it to him, and asked him if he knew Sir William Keith, and what kind of man he was; adding that he must be of

small discretion to think of setting a youth up in business who wanted three years to arrive at man's estate. Holmes said what he could in favor of the project, but my father was decidedly against it, and at last gave a flat denial. He wrote a civil letter to Sir William, thanking him for the patronage he had so kindly offered me, and declining to assist me as yet in setting up, I being, in his opinion, too young to be trusted with the management of an undertaking so important, and for which the preparation required a considerable expenditure.

My *old* companion Collins, who was a clerk in the post-office, pleased with the account I gave him of my new country, determined to go thither also; and, while I waited for my father's determination, he set out before me by land to Rhode Island, leaving his books, which were a pretty collection in mathematics and natural philosophy, to come with mine and me to New York, where he proposed to wait for me.

My father, though he did not approve Sir William's proposition, was yet pleased that I had been able to obtain so advantageous a character from a person of such note where I had resided, and that I had been so industrious and careful as to equip myself so handsomely in so short a time; therefore, seeing no prospect of an accommodation between my brother and me, he gave his consent to my returning again to Philadelphia, advised me to behave respectfully to the people there, endeavor to obtain the general esteem, and avoid lampooning and libel-



ing, to which he thought I had too much inclination ; telling me, that by steady industry and prudent parsimony I might save enough by the time I was one-and-twenty to set me up ; and that, if I came near the matter, he would help me out with the rest. This was all I could obtain, except some small gifts as tokens of his and my mother's love, when I embarked again for New York, now with their approbation and their blessing.

The sloop putting in at Newport, Rhode Island, I visited my brother John, who had been married and settled there some years. He received me very affectionately, for he always loved me. A friend of his, one Vernon, having some money due to him in Pennsylvania, about thirty-five pounds currency, desired I would recover it for him, and keep it till I had his directions what to employ it in. Accordingly, he gave me an order to receive it. This business afterward occasioned me a good deal of uneasiness.

At Newport we took in a number of passengers, among whom were two young women traveling together, and a sensible, matron-like Quaker lady, with her servants. I had shown an obliging disposition to render her some little services, which probably impressed her with sentiments of good will toward me ; for when she witnessed the daily growing familiarity between the young women and myself, which they appeared to encourage, she took me aside, and said, " Young man, I am concerned for thee, as thou hast no friend with thee, and seems





not to know much of the world, or of the snares youth is exposed to; depend upon it, these are very bad women; I can see it by all their actions; and if thee art not upon thy guard, they will draw thee into some danger; they are strangers to thee, and I advise thee, in a friendly concern for thy welfare, to have no acquaintance with them." As I seemed at first not to think so ill of them as she did, she mentioned some things she had observed and heard that had escaped my notice, but now convinced me she was right. I thanked her for her kind advice, and promised to follow it. When we arrived at New York, they told me where they lived, and invited me to come and see them; but I avoided it, and it was well I did; for the next day the captain missed a silver spoon and some other things, that had been taken out of his cabin, and, knowing that these were a couple of strumpets, he got a warrant to search their lodgings, found the stolen goods, and had the thieves punished. So, though we had escaped a sunken rock, which we scraped upon in

the passage, I thought this escape of rather more importance to me.

At New York I found my friend Collins, who had arrived there some time before me. We had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together; but he had the advantage of more time for reading and studying, and a wonderful genius for mathematical learning, in which he far outstripped me. While I lived in Boston, most of my hours of leisure for conversation were spent with him, and he continued a sober as well as industrious lad; was much respected for his learning by several of the clergy and other gentlemen, and seemed to promise making a good figure in life. But, during my absence, he had acquired a habit of drinking brandy; and I found by his own account, as well as that of others, that he had been drunk every day since his arrival at New York, and behaved himself in a very extravagant manner. He had gamed too, and lost his money, so that I was obliged to discharge his lodgings, and defray his expenses on the road and at Philadelphia, which proved a great burden to me.

The then Governor of New York, Burnet (son of Bishop Burnet), hearing from the captain that one of the passengers had a great many books on board, desired him to bring me to see him. I waited on him, and should have taken Collins with me had he been sober. The governor received me with great civility, showed me his library, which was a considerable one, and we had a good deal of conversation relative to books and authors. 'This was the second



governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me; and for a poor boy like me, it was very pleasing.

We proceeded to Philadelphia. I received in the way Vernon's money, without which we could hardly have finished our journey. Collins wished to be employed in some counting-house; but, whether they discovered his dram-drinking by his breath, or by his behavior, though he had some recommendations, he met with no success in any application, and continued lodging and boarding at the same house with me, and at my expense. Knowing I had that money of Vernon's, he was continually borrowing of me, still promising repayment as soon as he should be in business. At length he had got so much of it that I was distressed to think what I should do in case of being called on to remit it.

His drinking continued, about which we sometimes quarreled; for, when a little intoxicated, he was very irritable. Once, in a boat on the Dela-



ware with some other young men, he refused to row in his turn. "I will be rowed home," said he. "We will not row you," said I. "You must," said he, "or stay all night on the water, just as you please." The others said, "Let us row; what signifies it?" But, my mind being soured with his other conduct, I continued to refuse. So he swore he would make me row, or throw me overboard; and coming along, stepping on the thwarts, toward me, when he came up and struck at me, I clapped my head under his thighs, and, rising, pitched him head-foremost into the river. I knew he was a good swimmer, and so was under little concern about him; but before he could get round to lay hold of the boat, we had with a few strokes pulled her out of his reach; and whenever he drew near the boat,



we asked him if he would row, striking a few strokes to slide her away from him. He was ready to stifle with vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row. Finding him at last beginning to tire, we drew

him into the boat, and brought him home dripping wet. We hardly exchanged a civil word after this adventure. At length a West India captain, who had a commission to procure a preceptor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbadoes, met with him, and proposed to carry him thither to fill that situation. He accepted, and promised to remit me what he owed me out of the first money he should receive; but I never heard of him after.

The violation of my trust respecting Vernon's money was one of the first great *errata* of my life; and this showed that my father was not much out in his judgment when he considered me as too young to manage business. But Sir William, on reading his letter, said he was too prudent; that there was a great difference in persons; and discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it. "But, since he will not set you up, I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed." This was spoken with such an appearance of cordiality, that I had not the least doubt of his meaning what he said. I had hitherto kept the proposition of my setting up a secret in Philadelphia, and I still kept it. Had it been known that I depended on the governor, probably some friend, that knew him better, would have advised me not to rely on him, as I afterward heard it as his known character to be liberal of promises

which he never meant to keep. Yet, unsolicited as he was by me, how could I think his generous offers insincere ? I believed him one of the best men in the world.

I presented him an inventory of a little printing-house, amounting by my computation to about one hundred pounds sterling. He liked it, but asked me if my being on the spot in England to choose the types, and see that every thing was good of the kind, might not be of some advantage. "Then," said he, "when there, you may make acquaintance, and establish correspondences in the bookselling and stationery line." I agreed that this might be advantageous. "Then," said he, "get yourself ready to go with *Annis* ;" which was the annual ship, and the only one at that time usually passing between London and Philadelphia. But as it would be some months before *Annis* sailed, I continued working with Keimer, fretting extremely about the money Collins had got from me, and in great apprehensions of being called upon for it by Vernon ; this, however, did not happen for some years after.

I believe I have omitted mentioning that, in my first voyage from Boston to Philadelphia, being becalmed off Block Island, our crew employed themselves in catching cod, and hauled up a great number. Till then, I had stuck to my resolution to eat nothing that had had life ; and on this occasion I considered, according to my master Tryon, the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had, nor could do us any injury



that might justify this massacre. All this seemed very reasonable. But I had been formerly a great lover of fish, and, when it came out of the frying-pan, it smelt admirably well. I balanced some time between principle and inclination, till recollecting that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then thought I, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we may not eat you." So I dined upon cod very heartily, and have since continued to eat as other people, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet. So convenient a thing it is to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make a *reason* for every thing one has a mind to do.

Keimer and I lived on a pretty good, familiar footing, and agreed tolerably well, for he suspected nothing of my setting up. He retained a great deal of his old enthusiasm, and loved argumentation. We therefore had many disputations. I used to work him so with my Socratic method, and had trepanned him so often by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, yet by degrees leading to the point, and bringing him into difficulties and contradictions, that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common question, without asking first, "What do you intend to infer from that?" However, it gave him so high an opinion of my abilities in the confuting way, that he seriously proposed my being his colleague in a project he had of setting up a new sect. He was to preach the doctrines, and I was to con-

found all opponents. When he came to explain with me upon the doctrines, I found several conundrums which I objected to, unless I might have my way a little too, and introduce some of mine.

Keimer wore his beard at full length, because somewhere in the Mosaic law it is said, "*Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard.*" He likewise kept the Seventh day, Sabbath; and these two points were essential with him. I disliked both; but agreed to them on condition of his adopting the doctrine of not using animal food. "I doubt," said he, "my constitution will not bear it." I assured him it would, and that he would be the better for it. He was usually a great eater, and I wished to give myself some diversion in half starving him. He consented to try the practice, if I would keep him company. I did so, and we held it for three months. Our provisions were purchased, cooked, and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighborhood, who had from me a list of forty dishes, which she prepared for us at different times, in which there entered neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. This whim suited me the better at this time from the cheapness of it, not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week. I have since kept several Lents most strictly, leaving the common diet for that, and that for the common, abruptly, without the least inconvenience, so that I think there is little in the advice of making those changes by easy gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffered grievously, grew tired of the project, longed for the flesh-

pots of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited me and two women friends to dine with him; but, it being brought too soon upon table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before we came.

I had made some courtship during this time to Miss Read. I had a great respect and affection for



her, and had some reasons to believe she had the same for me; but, as I was about to take a long voyage, and we were both very young, only a little above eighteen, it was thought most prudent by her mother to prevent our going too far at present, as a marriage, if it was to take place, would be more convenient after my return, when I should be, as I hoped, set up in my business. Perhaps, too, she thought my expectations not so well founded as I imagined them to be.

My chief acquaintances at this time were Charles



Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph, all lovers of reading. The two first were clerks to an eminent scrivener or conveyancer in the town, Charles Brockden; the other was a clerk to a merchant. Watson was a pious, sensible young man, of great integrity; the others rather more lax in their principles of religion, particularly Ralph, who, as well as Collins, had been unsettled by me, for which they both made me suffer. Osborne was sensible, candid, frank; sincere and affectionate to his friends; but, in literary matters, too fond of criticism. Ralph was ingenious, genteel in his manners, and extremely eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker. Both were great admirers of poetry, and began to try their hands in little pieces. Many pleasant walks we have had together on Sundays in the woods, on the banks of the Schuylkill, where



we read to one another, and conferred on what we had read.

Ralph was inclined to give himself up entirely to

poetry, not doubting that he might make great proficiency in it, and even make his fortune by it. He pretended that the greatest poets must, when they first began to write, have committed as many faults as he did. Osborne endeavored to dissuade him, assured him he had no genius for poetry, and advised him to think of nothing beyond the business he was bred to; that, in the mercantile way, though he had no stock, he might, by his diligence and punctuality, recommend himself to employment as a factor, and in time acquire wherewith to trade on his own account. I approved, for my part, the amusing one's self with poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's language, but no further.

On this it was proposed that we should each of us, at our next meeting, produce a piece of our own composing, in order to improve by our mutual observations, criticisms, and corrections. As language and expression were what we had in view we excluded all considerations of invention by agreeing that the task should be a version of the eighteenth Psalm, which describes the descent of a Deity. When the time of our meeting drew nigh, Ralph called on me first, and let me know his piece was ready. I told him I had been busy, and, having little inclination, had done nothing. He then showed me his piece for my opinion, and I much approved it, as it appeared to me to have great merit. "Now," said he, "Osborne never will allow the least merit in any thing of mine, but makes a thousand criticisms out of mere envy. He is not so jealous of you; I wish

therefore, you would take this piece, and produce it as yours; I will pretend not to have had time, and so produce nothing. We shall then hear what he will say to it." It was agreed, and I immediately transcribed it, that it might appear in my own hand.

We met; Watson's performance was read; there were some beauties in it, but many defects. Osborne's was read; it was much better; Ralph did it justice; remarked some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward; seemed desirous of being excused; had not had sufficient time to correct, &c.; but no excuse could be admitted; produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the contest, and joined in applauding it. Ralph only made some criticisms, and proposed some amendments; but I defended my text. Osborne was severe against Ralph, and told me he was no better able to criticise than compose verses. As these two were returning home, Osborne expressed himself still more strongly in favor of what he thought my production; having before refrained, as he said, lest I should think he meant to flatter me. 'But who would have imagined,' said he, "that Franklin was capable of such a performance; such painting, such force, such fire! He has even improved on the original. In common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, good God! how he writes!" When we next met, Ralph discovered the trick we had played, and Osborne was laughed at.



This transaction fixed Ralph in his resolution of becoming a poet. I did all I could to dissuade him from it, but he continued scribbling verses till Pope cured him.\* He became, however, a pretty good prose writer. More of him hereafter. But, as I may not have occasion to mention the other two, I shall just remark here, that Watson died in my arms a few years after, much lamented, being the best of our set. Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer and made money, but died young. He and I had made a serious agreement, that the one who happened first to die should, if possible, make a friendly visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that separate state. But he never fulfilled his promise.

The governor, seeming to like my company, had

\* In the third or fourth edition of the "Dunciad" occur the lines,

"Silence, ye wolves, while Ralph to Cynthia howls,  
And makes Night hideous—answer him, ye owls."

A note more satirical than the text adds, "James Ralph, a name inserted after the first editions, not known to our author till he writ a swearing piece, called Sawney, very abusive of Dr. Swift, Mr. Gay, and himself. These lines allude to a thing of his, entitled Night, a poem." Pope calls him a "low writer" who praised himself in the journals—wholly illiterate, &c. Ralph, as is evident from Franklin's account, was a man of no moral rectitude; and his flexible principles as a political hack obtained him a pension. He is said to have obtained possession of a manuscript belonging to Frederic, prince of Wales, for surrendering which his former pension was increased, just before his death in 1762, to six hundred pounds a year. Mr. Pope could hardly be thought to have "cured him of poetry," since he has left a tragedy and other dramatic pieces behind him. Other works were several volumes of history, showing great research and acuteness; a much-praised work, 2 vols. 8vo, on the "Use and Abuse of Parliaments;" a work in 8vo, "The Case of Authors by Profession;" and a vast quantity of pamphlets, &c., &c.

me frequently at his house, and his setting me up was always mentioned as a fixed thing. I was to take with me letters recommendatory to a number of his friends, besides the letter of credit to furnish me with the necessary money for purchasing the press, types, paper, &c. For these letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready; but a future time was still named. Thus we went on till the ship, whose departure too had been several times postponed, was on the point of sailing. Then, when I called to take my leave and receive the letters, his secretary, Dr. Baird, came out to me and said the governor was extremely busy in writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the ship, and then the letters would be delivered to me.

Ralph, though married, and having one child, had determined to accompany me in this voyage. It was thought he intended to establish a correspondence, and obtain goods to sell on commission; but I found after, that, having some cause of discontent with his wife's relations, he proposed to leave her on their hands, and never to return to America. Having taken leave of my friends, and exchanged promises with Miss Read, I quitted Philadelphia in the ship, which anchored at Newcastle. The governor was there; but when I went to his lodging, his secretary came to me from him with expressions of the greatest regret that he could not then see me, being engaged in business of the utmost importance, but that he would send the letters to me on board,



wishing me heartily a good voyage and a speedy return, &c. I returned on board a little puzzled, but still not doubting.

Mr. Andrew Hamilton, a celebrated lawyer of Philadelphia, had taken passage in the same ship for himself and son, with Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, and Messrs. Oniam and Russel, masters of an iron work in Maryland, who had engaged the great cabin; so that Ralph and I were forced to take up with a berth in the steerage, and none on board knowing us, were considered as ordinary persons. But Mr. Hamilton and his son (it was James, since governor) returned from Newcastle to Philadelphia, the father being recalled by a great fee to plead for a seized ship; and, just before we sailed, Colonel



French coming on board, and showing me great respect, I was more taken notice of, and, with my friend Ralph, invited by the other gentlemen to come into the cabin, there being now room. Accordingly, we removed thither.

Understanding that Colonel French had brought on board the governor's despatches, I asked the captain for those letters that were to be under my care. He said all were put into the bag together, and he could not then come at them; but, before we landed in England, I should have an opportunity of picking them out; so I was satisfied for the present, and we proceeded on our voyage. We had a sociable company in the cabin, and lived uncommonly well, having the addition of all Mr. Hamilton's stores, who had laid in plentifully. In this passage Mr. Denham contracted a friendship for me that continued during his life. The voyage was otherwise not a pleasant one, as we had a great deal of bad weather.

## CHAPTER III.

WHEN we came into the Channel, the captain kept his word with me, and gave me an opportunity of examining the bag for the governor's letters. I found some upon which my name was put as under my care. I picked out six or seven, that, by the handwriting, I thought might be the promised letters, especially as one of them was addressed to Baskett, the king's printer, and another to some stationer. We arrived in London the 24th of December, 1724. I waited upon the stationer, who came first in my way, delivering the letter as from Governor Keith. "I don't know such a person," said



he ; but, opening the letter, "O ! this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him." So, putting the letter into my hand, he turned on his heel and left me to serve some customer. I was surprised to find these were not the governor's letters ; and, after recollecting and comparing circumstances, I began to doubt his sincerity. I found my friend Denham, and opened the whole affair to him. He let me into Keith's character ; told me there was not the least probability that he had written any letters for me ; that no one, who knew him, had the smallest dependence on him ; and he laughed at the idea of the governor's giving me a letter of credit, having, as he said, no credit to give. On my expressing some concern about what I should do, he advised me to endeavor getting some employment in the way of my business. "Among the printers here," said he, "you will improve yourself, and, when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage."

We both of us happened to know, as well as the stationer, that Riddlesden, the attorney, was a very knave. He had half ruined Miss Read's father by persuading him to be bound for him. By his letter it appeared there was a secret scheme on foot to the prejudice of Mr. Hamilton (supposed to be then coming over with us) ; that Keith was concerned in it with Riddlesden. Denham, who was a friend of Hamilton's, thought he ought to be acquainted with it ; so, when he arrived in England, which was soon



after, partly from resentment and ill will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from good will to him, I waited on him, and gave him the letter. He thanked me cordially, the information being of importance to him; and from that time he became my friend, greatly to my advantage afterward on many occasions.

But what shall we think of a governor playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant boy! It was a habit he had acquired. He wished to please everybody; and, having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, though not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning, and passed during his administration.

Ralph and I were inseparable companions. We took lodgings together in Little Britain at three shillings and sixpence a week—as much as we could then afford. He found some relations, but they were poor, and unable to assist him. He now let me know his intentions of remaining in London, and that he never meant to return to Philadelphia. He had brought no money with him, the whole he could muster having been expended in paying his passage. I had fifteen pistoles; so he borrowed occasionally of me to subsist, while he was looking out for business. He first endeavored to get into the playhouse, believing himself qualified for an actor;

but Wilkes,\* to whom he applied, advised him candidly not to think of that employment, as it was impossible he should succeed in it. Then he proposed to Roberts, a publisher in Paternoster Row, to write for him a weekly paper like the *Spectator*, on certain conditions, which Roberts did not approve. Then he endeavored to get employment as a hackney writer, to copy for the stationers and lawyers about the Temple, but could not find a vacancy.

For myself, I immediately got into work at Palmer's, a famous printing-house in Bartholomew Close, where I continued near a year. I was pretty diligent, but I spent with Ralph a good deal of my earnings at plays and public amusements. We had nearly consumed all my pistoles, and now just rubbed on from hand to mouth. He seemed quite to have forgotten his wife and child, and I, by degrees, my engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that was to let her know I was not likely soon to return. This was another of the great *errata* of my life, which I could wish to correct if I were to live it over again. In fact, by our expenses, I was constantly kept unable to pay my passage.

At Palmer's I was employed in composing for the second edition of Wollaston's "*Religion of Nature.*" Some of his reasonings not appearing to me well founded, I wrote a little metaphysical piece in which I made remarks on them. It was entitled "*A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and*

\* A comedian of eminence.

*Pain.*" I inscribed it to my friend Ralph; I printed a small number. It occasioned my being more considered by Mr. Palmer as a young man of some ingenuity, though he seriously expostulated with me upon the principles of my pamphlet, which to him appeared abominable. My printing this pamphlet was another *erratum*. While I lodged in Little Britain, I made an acquaintance with one Wilcox, a bookseller, whose shop was next door. He had an immense collection of second-hand books. Circulating libraries were not then in use; but we agreed that, on certain reasonable terms, which I have now forgotten, I might take, read, and return



any of his books. This I esteemed a great advantage, and I made as much use of it as I could.

My pamphlet by some means falling into the hands of one Lyons, a surgeon, author of a book entitled "*The Infallibility of Human Judgment*," it occasioned an acquaintance between us. He took great no



tice of me, called on me often to converse on those subjects, carried me to the Horns, a pale alehouse in — Lane, Cheapside, and introduced me to Dr. Mandeville, author of the "*Fable of the Bees*," who had a club there, of which he was the soul, being a most facetious, entertaining companion. Lyons, too, introduced me to Dr. Pemberton, at Batson's Coffee-house, who promised to give me an opportunity, some time or other, of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, of which I was extremely desirous; but this never happened.

I had brought over a few curiosities, among which the principal was a purse made of the *asbestos*, which purifies by fire. Sir Hans Sloane heard of it, came to see me, and invited me to his house in Bloomsbury Square, showed me all his curiosities, and persuaded me to add that to the number, for which he paid me handsomely.

In our house lodged a young woman, a milliner, who, I think, had a shop in the Cloisters. She had been genteelly bred, was sensible, lively, and of a most pleasing conversation. Ralph read plays to her in the evenings, they grew intimate, she took another lodging, and he followed her. They lived together some time; but, he being still out of business, and her income not sufficient to maintain them with her child, he took a resolution of going from London, to try for a country school, which he thought himself well qualified to undertake, as he wrote an excellent hand, and was a master of arithmetic and accounts. This, however, he deemed a

business below him, and confident of future better fortune, when he should be unwilling to have it known that he once was so meanly employed, he changed his name, and did me the honor to assume mine; for I soon after had a letter from him, acquainting me that he was settled in a small village (in Berkshire, I think it was, where he taught reading and writing to ten or a dozen boys, at sixpence each per week), recommending Mrs. T—— to my care, and desiring me to write to him, directing for *Mr. Franklin*, schoolmaster, at such a place.

He continued to write to me frequently, sending me large specimens of an epic poem which he was then composing, and desiring my remarks and corrections. These I gave him from time to time, but endeavored rather to discourage his proceeding. One of Young's Satires was then just published. I copied and sent him a great part of it, which set in a strong light the folly of pursuing the Muses. All was in vain; sheets of the poem continued to come by every post. In the mean time, Mrs. T——, having on his account lost her friends and business, was often in distresses, and used to send for me, and borrow what money I could spare to help to alleviate them. I grew fond of her company, and, being at that time under no religious restraint, and taking advantage of my importance to her, I attempted to take some liberties with her (another *erratum*), which she repulsed with a proper degree of resentment. She wrote to Ralph and acquainted him with my conduct; this occasioned a breach between us; and,

when he returned to London, he let me know he considered all the obligations he had been under to me as annulled, from which I concluded I was never to expect his repaying the money I had lent him, or that I had advanced for him. This, however, was of little consequence, as he was totally unable; and by the loss of his friendship I found myself relieved from a heavy burden. I now began to think of getting a little beforehand, and, expecting better employment, I left Palmer's to work at Watts's, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still greater printing-house. Here I continued all the rest of my stay in London.

At my first admission into the printing-house I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been used to in America, where presswork is mixed with the composing. I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great drinkers of beer. On occasion, I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and several instances, that the *Water-American*, as they called me, was *stronger* than themselves, who drank *strong* beer! We had an alehouse boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary,





he supposed, to drink *strong* beer, that he might be *strong* to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore, if he could eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that vile liquor; an expense I was free from. And thus these poor devils keep themselves always under.

Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in

the composing-room, I left the pressmen; a new *bien venu* for drink, being five shillings, was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid one to the pressmen; the master thought so too, and forbade my paying it. I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private malice practised on me, by mixing my sorts, transposing and breaking my matter, &c., &c., if ever I stepped out of the room, and all ascribed to the *chapel ghost*, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted, that, notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself obliged to comply and pay the money, convinced of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.

I was now on a fair footing with them, and soon acquired considerable influence. I proposed some reasonable alterations in their *chapel*\* laws, and carried them against all opposition. From my example, a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could with me be supplied from a neighboring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three half pence. This was a more comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer.

\* A printing-office is in England called a *chapel*, from a tradition that printing was first carried on in an old chapel. The *bien venu*, or *well-come*, answers to the *footing* in other employments: it is altogether abolished in the United States, and is falling into disuse in England.

Those who continued sotting with their beer all day were often, by not paying, out of credit at the ale house, and used to make interest with me to get beer; their *light*, as they phrased it, *being out*. I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes near thirty shillings a week on their accounts. This, and my being esteemed a pretty good *riggite*, that is, a jocular verbal satirist, supported my consequence in the society. My constant attendance (I never making a *St. Monday*) recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing occasioned my being put upon work of dispatch, which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably.

My lodgings in Little Britain being too remote, I found another in Duke-street, opposite to the Romish Chapel. It was up three pair of stairs backward, at an Italian warehouse. A widow lady kept the





house ; she had a daughter, and a maid servant, and a journeyman who attended the warehouse, but lodged abroad. After sending to inquire my character at the house where I last lodged, she agreed to take me in at the same rate, three shillings and sixpence a week ; cheaper, as she said, from the protection she expected in having a man to lodge in the house. She was a widow, an elderly woman ; had been bred a Protestant, being a clergyman's daughter, but was converted to the Catholic religion by her husband, whose memory she much revered ; had lived much among people of distinction, and knew a thousand anecdotes of them as far back as the time of Charles the Second. She was lame in her knees with the gout, and, therefore, seldom stirred out of her room, so sometimes wanted company ; and hers was so highly amusing to me, that I was sure to spend an evening with her whenever she desired it. Our supper was only half an anchovy each, on a very little slice of bread and butter, and half a pint of ale between us ; but the entertainment was in her conversation. My always keeping good hours, and giving little trouble in the family, made her unwilling to part with me ; so that, when I talked of a lodging I had heard of, nearer my business, for two shillings a week, which, intent as I was on saving money, made some difference, she bid me not think of it, for she would abate me two shillings a week for the future ; so I remained with her at one shilling and sixpence as long as I stayed in London.

In a garret of her house there lived a maiden lady

of seventy, in the most retired manner, of whom my landlady gave me this account: that she was a Roman Catholic, had been sent abroad when young, and lodged in a nunnery with an intent of becoming a nun; but, the country not agreeing with her, she returned to England, where, there being no nunnery, she had vowed to lead the life of a nun, as near as might be done in those circumstances. Accordingly, she had given all her estate to charitable purposes, reserving only twelve pounds a year to live on, and out of this sum she still gave a part in charity, living herself on water-gruel only, and using no fire but to boil it. She had lived many years in that garret, being permitted to remain there gratis by successive Catholic tenants of the house below, as they deemed it a blessing to have her there. A priest visited her to confess her every day. "From this I asked her," said my landlady, "how she, as she lived, could possibly find so much employment for a confessor?" "Oh," said she, "it is impossible to avoid *vain*



*thoughts.*" I was permitted once to visit her. She was cheerful and polite, and conversed pleasantly. The room was clean, but had no other furniture than a mattress, a table with a crucifix, and a book, a stool which she gave me to sit on, and a picture over the chimney of Saint Veronica displaying her handkerchief, with the miraculous figure of Christ's bleeding face on it, which she explained to me with great seriousness. She looked pale, but was never sick; and I give it as another instance on how small an income life and health may be supported.

At Watts's printing-house I contracted an acquaintance with an ingenious young man, one Wygate, who, having wealthy relations, had been better educated than most printers; was a tolerable Latinist, spoke French, and loved reading. I taught him and a friend of his to swim at twice going into the river, and they soon became good swimmers. They introduced me to some gentlemen from the country, who went to Chelsea by water to see the College and Don Saltero's curiosities. In our return, at the request of the company, whose curiosity Wygate had excited, I stripped and leaped into the river, and swam from near Chelsea to Blackfriar's, performing in the way many feats of activity, both upon and under the water, that surprised and pleased those to whom they were novelties.

I had from a child been delighted with this exercise, had studied and practised Thevenot's motions and positions, and added some of my own, aim-



ing at the graceful and easy as well as the useful.\* All these I took this occasion of exhibiting to the company, and was much flattered by their admiration; and Wygate, who was desirous of becoming a master, grew more and more attached to me on that account, as well as from the similarity of our studies. He at length proposed to me traveling all over Europe together, supporting ourselves everywhere by working at our business. I was once inclined to it; but, mentioning it to my good friend Mr. Denham, with whom I often spent an hour when I had leisure, he dissuaded me from it, advising me to think only of returning to Pennsylvania, which he was now about to do.

I must record one trait of this good man's character. He had formerly been in business at Bristol, but failed in debt to a number of people, compounded, and went to America. There, by a close application to business as a merchant, he acquired a plentiful fortune in a few years. Returning to England in the ship with me, he invited his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he thanked them for the easy composition they had favored him with, and, when they expected nothing but the treat, every man at the first remove found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount of the unpaid remainder, with interest.

\* The remarkable experiments of Franklin floating with a kite-string in his hand, &c., &c., and, above all, his sleeping an hour by the watch while floating, are evidences of what command a man may obtain over the water. He wrote two interesting papers on the art of swimming, which have been much quoted.

He now told me he was about to return to Philadelphia, and should carry over a great quantity of goods in order to open a store there. He proposed to take me over as his clerk, to keep his books, in which he would instruct me, copy his letters, and attend the store. He added, that, as soon as I should be acquainted with mercantile business, he would promote me by sending me with a cargo of flour and bread to the West Indies, and procure me commissions from others which would be profitable; and, if I managed well, would establish me handsomely. The thing pleased me; for I was grown tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months I had spent in Pennsylvania, and wished again to see it; therefore I immediately agreed on the terms of fifty pounds a year, Pennsylvania money; less, indeed, than my present gettings as a compositor, but affording a better prospect.

I now took leave of printing, as I thought, for ever, and was daily employed in my new business, going about with Mr. Denham among the tradesmen to purchase various articles, and see them packed up, delivering messages, calling upon workmen to dispatch, &c.; and, when all was on board, I had a few days' leisure. On one of these days, I was, to my surprise, sent for by a great man I knew only by name, Sir William Wyndham, and I waited upon him. He had heard by some means or other of my swimming from Chelsea to Blackfriar's, and of my teaching Wygate and another young man to swim in a few hours. He had two sons, about to set out

on their travels; he wished to have them first taught swimming, and proposed to gratify me handsomely if I would teach them. They were not yet come to town, and my stay was uncertain, so I could not undertake it; but, from the incident, I thought it likely that, if I were to remain in England and open a swimming-school, I might get a good deal of money; and it struck me so strongly, that, had the overture been made me sooner, probably I should not so soon have returned to America. Many years after, you and I had something of more importance to do with one of these sons of Sir William Wyndham, become Earl of Egremont, which I shall mention in its place.

Thus I passed about eighteen months in London; most part of the time I worked hard at my business, and spent but little upon myself except in seeing plays and in books. My friend Ralph had kept me poor; he owed me about twenty-seven pounds, which I was now never likely to receive; a great sum out of my small earnings! I loved him, notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities. I had improved my knowledge, however, though I had by no means improved my fortune; but I had made some very ingenious acquaintance, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably.



## CHAPTER IV.

WE sailed from Gravesend on the 23d of July, 1726. For the incidents of the voyage, I refer you to my Journal, where you will find them all minutely related. Perhaps the most important part of that journal is the *plan*\* to be found in it, which I formed at sea, for regulating the future conduct of my life. It is the more remarkable, as being formed when I was so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite through to old age.

We landed at Philadelphia on the 11th of October, where I found sundry alterations. Keith was no longer governor, being superseded by Major Gordon. I met him walking the streets as a common citizen. He seemed a little ashamed at seeing me, and passed without saying any thing. I should have been as much ashamed at seeing Miss Read, had not her friends, despairing with reason of my return after the receipt of my letter, persuaded her to marry an-

\* The part referred to as the most "important part of the Journal," the Plan of Order, is not found in the manuscript Journal which was left among Franklin's papers; nor is the *original Journal* extant in this country. The copy of the Journal found among the papers was made at Reading in 1787; the original is probably lost, as the son of William Franklin died in England without issue. In a subsequent chapter of the autobiography a specimen of the "Plan of Order" is given. The Journal at sea is pleasantly written, but contains nothing of so much interest and importance as the autobiography.

other, one Rogers, a potter, which was done in my absence. With him, however, she was never happy, and soon parted from him, refusing to cohabit with him or bear his name, it being now said he had another wife. He was a worthless fellow, though an excellent workman, which was the temptation to her friends. He got into debt, ran away in 1727 or 1728, went to the West Indies, and died there. Keimer had got a better house, a shop well supplied with stationery, plenty of new types, and a number of hands, though none good, and seemed to have a great deal of business.

Mr. Denham took a store in Water-street, where we opened our goods; I attended the business diligently, studied accounts, and grew, in a little time, expert at selling. We lodged and boarded together; he counseled me as a father, having a sincere regard for me. I respected and loved him, and we might have gone on together very happily; but, in the beginning of February, 1727, when I had just passed my twenty-first year, we both were taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off. I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was at the time rather disappointed when I found myself recovering, regretting, in some degree, that I must now, some time or other, have all that disagreeable work to go over again. I forget what Mr. Denham's distemper was; it held him a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small legacy in a nuncupative will, as a token of his kindness for me, and he left me once

more to the wide world; for the store was taken into the care of his executors, and my employment under him ended.

My brother-in-law, Holmes, being now at Philadelphia, advised my return to my business; and Keimer tempted me, with an offer of large wages by the year, to come and take the management of his printing-house, that he might better attend to his stationer's shop. I had heard a bad character of him in London from his wife and her friends, and was not for having any more to do with him. I wished for employment as a merchant's clerk; but, not meeting with any, I closed again with Keimer. I found in his house these hands: Hugh Meredith, a Welsh Pennsylvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work; he was honest, sensible, a man of experience, and fond of reading, but addicted to drinking. Stephen Potts, a young countryman of full age, bred to the same, of uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humor, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at extreme low wages per week, to be raised a shilling every three months, as they would deserve by improving in their business; and the expectation of these high wages, to come on hereafter, was what he had drawn them in with. Meredith was to work at press, Potts at book-binding, which he, by agreement, was to teach them, though he knew neither one nor the other. John —, a wild Irishman, brought up to no business, whose service, for four years, Keimer had purchased from the captain of a ship; he, too, was to be made



a pressman. George Webb, an Oxford scholar, whose time for four years he had likewise bought, intending him for a compositor, of whom more presently; and David Harry, a country boy, whom he had taken apprentice.

I soon perceived that the intention of engaging me at wages so much higher than he had been used to give, was, to have these raw, cheap hands formed through me; and, as soon as I had instructed them, they being all articed to him, he should be able to do without me. I went, however, very cheerfully, put his printing-house in order, which had been in great confusion, and brought his hands by degrees to mind their business and to do it better.

It was an odd thing to find an Oxford scholar in the situation of a bought servant. He was not more than eighteen years of age, and he gave me this account of himself: that he was born in Gloucester, educated at a grammar-school, and had been distinguished among the scholars for some apparent superiority in performing his part, when they exhibited plays; belonged to the Wits' Club there, and had written some pieces in prose and verse, which were printed in the Gloucester newspapers; thence was sent to Oxford, where he continued about a year, but not well satisfied, wishing of all things to see London, and become a player. At length, receiving his quarterly allowance of fifteen guineas, instead of discharging his debts he went out of town, hid his gown in a furze bush, and walked to London, where, having no friend to advise him, he fell into

bad company, soon spent his guineas, found no means of being introduced among the players, grew necessitous, pawned his clothes, and wanted bread. Walking the street very hungry, not knowing what to do with himself, a crimp's bill was put into his hand, offering immediate entertainment and encouragement to such as would bind themselves to serve in America. He went directly, signed the indentures, was put into the ship, and came over, never writing a line to his friends to acquaint them what was become of him. He was lively, witty, good-natured, and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree.

John, the Irishman, soon ran away; with the rest I began to live very agreeably, for they all respected me the more, as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learned something daily. My acquaintance with ingenious people in the town increased. We never worked on Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath, so that I had two days for reading. Keimer himself treated me with great civility and apparent regard, and nothing now made me uneasy but my debt to Vernon, which I was yet unable to pay, being hitherto but a poor economist. He, however, kindly made no demand of it.

Our printing-house often wanted sorts, and there was no letter-foundry in America; I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to the matter; however, I contrived a mold, and made use of the letters we had as puncheons,

struck the matrices in lead, and thus supplied in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies. I also engraved several things on occasion; made the ink; I was warehouseman, and, in short, quite a *fac-totum*.

But, however serviceable I might be, I found that my services became every day of less importance, as the other hands improved in their business; and, when Keimer paid me a second quarter's wages, he let me know that he felt them too heavy, and thought I should make an abatement. He grew by degrees less civil, put on more the airs of master, frequently found fault, was captious, and seemed ready for an outbreaking. I went on, nevertheless, with a good deal of patience, thinking that his encumbered circumstances were partly the cause. At length a trifle snapped our connection; for, a great noise happening near the court-house, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer, being in the street, looked up and saw me, called



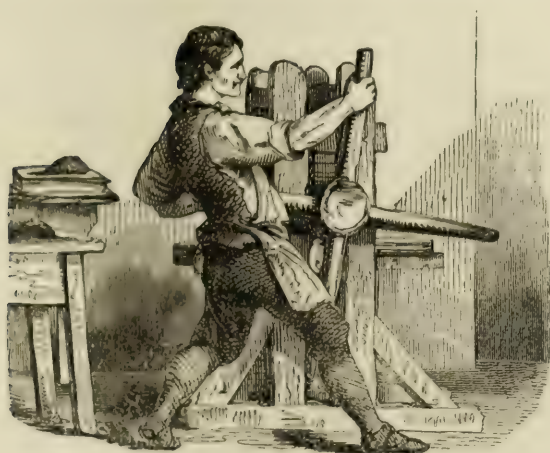


out to me in a loud voice and angry tone to mind my business, adding some reproachful words, that nettled me the more for their publicity, all the neighbors who were looking out on the same occasion being witnesses how I was treated. He came up immediately into the printing-house, continued the quarrel, high words passed on both sides, he gave me the quarter's warning we had stipulated, expressing a wish that he had not been obliged to so long a warning. I told him his wish was unnecessary, for I would leave him that instant; and so, taking my hat, walked out of doors, desiring Meredith, whom I saw below, to take care of some things I left, and bring them to my lodgings.

Meredith came accordingly in the evening, when we talked my affair over. He had conceived a great regard for me, and was very unwilling that I should leave the house while he remained in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native country, which I began to think of; he reminded me that Keimer was in debt for all he possessed; that his creditors began to be uneasy; that he kept his shop miserably, sold often without a profit for ready money, and often trusted without keeping accounts; that he must therefore fail, which would make a vacancy I might profit of. I objected my want of money. He then let me know that his father had a high opinion of me, and, from some discourse that had passed between them, he was sure would advance money to set me up, if I would enter into partnership with him. "My time," said he, "will be out with Keimer in

the spring; by that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible I am no workman; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

The proposal was agreeable to me, and I consented; his father was in town and approved of it; the more as he said I had great influence with his son, had prevailed on him to abstain long from dram-drinking, and he hoped might break him of that wretched habit entirely, when we came to be so closely connected. I gave an inventory to the father, who carried it to a merchant; the things were sent for, the secret was to be kept till they should arrive, and in the mean time I was to get work, if I could, at the other printing-house. But I found no vacancy there, and so remained idle a few days, when Keimer, on a prospect of being employed to print some paper money in New Jersey, which would require cuts and various types that I only could supply, and apprehending Bradford might engage me and get the job from him, sent me a very civil message, that old friends should not part for a few words, the effect of sudden passion, and wishing me to return. Meredith persuaded me to comply, as it would give more opportunity for his improvement under my daily instructions; so I returned, and we went on more smoothly than for some time before. The New Jersey job was obtained, I contrived a copper-plate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country; I cut several orna-



ments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction; and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep himself longer from ruin.

At Burlington I made acquaintance with many principal people of the province. Several of them had been appointed by the Assembly a committee to attend the press, and to take care that no more bills were printed than the law directed. They were therefore, by turns, constantly with us, and generally he who attended brought with him a friend or two for company. My mind having been much more improved by reading than Keimer's, I suppose it was for that reason my conversation seemed to be more valued. They had me to their houses, introduced me to their friends, and showed me much civility; while he, though the master, was a little neglected. In truth, he was an odd creature; ignorant of common life, fond of rudely opposing received opinions, slovenly to extreme dirtiness, enthusias-



tic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal.

We continued there near three months; and by that time I could reckon among my acquired friends, Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, and several of the Smiths, members of Assembly, and Isaac Decow, the surveyor-general. The latter was a shrewd, sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself, when young, by wheeling clay for the brick-makers, learned to write after he was of age, carried the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying, and he had now, by his industry, acquired a good estate; and said he, "I foresee that you will soon work this man out of his business, and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia." He had then not the least intimation of my intention to set up there or anywhere. These friends were afterward of great use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their regard for me as long as they lived.

Before I enter upon my public appearance in business, it may be well to let you know the then state of my mind with regard to my principles and morals, that you may see how far those influenced the future events of my life. My parents had early given me religious impressions, and brought me through my childhood piously in the Dissenting way. But I was scarce fifteen, when, after doubting by turns several points, as I found them disputed in the different books I read, I began to doubt of the Revela-

tion itself. Some books against Deism fell into my hands ; they were said to be the substance of the sermons which had been preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them ; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations ; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist. My arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph ; but, each of these having wronged me greatly without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct toward me (who was another freethinker), and my own toward Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine, though it might be true, was not very useful. My London pamphlet, printed in 1725, which had for its motto these lines of Dryden :

“ Whatever is, is right. But purblind man  
Sees but a part o' the chain, the nearest links :  
His eyes not carrying to that equal beam,  
That poises all above ;”

and which, from the attributes of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, concluded that nothing could possibly be wrong in the world, and that vice and virtue were empty distinctions, no such things existing, appeared now not so clever a performance as I once thought it ; and I doubted whether some error had not insinuated itself unperceived into my argument, so as to infect all that followed, as is common in metaphysical reasonings.

I grew convinced that *truth, sincerity, and integrity* in dealings between man and man were of the utmost importance to the felicity of life; and I formed written resolutions, which still remain in my journal book, to practice them ever while I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me, as such; but I entertained an opinion that, though certain actions might not be bad *because* they were forbidden by it, or good *because* it commanded them, yet probably those actions might be forbidden *because* they were bad for us, or commanded *because* they were beneficial to us, in their own natures, all the circumstances of things considered. And this persuasion, with the kind hand of Providence, or some guardian angel, or accidental favorable circumstances and situations, or all together, preserved me, through this dangerous time of youth, and the hazardous situations I was sometimes in among strangers, remote from the eye and advice of my father, free from any *willful* gross immorality or injustice, that might have been expected from my want of religion. I say *willful*, because the instances I have mentioned had something of *necessity* in them, from my youth, in experience, and the knavery of others. I had therefore a tolerable character to begin the world with; I valued it properly, and determined to preserve it.

We had not been long returned to Philadelphia before the new types arrived from London. We settled with Keimer, and left him by his consent before he heard of it. We found a house to let near the Market, and took it. To lessen the rent, which







was then but twenty-four pounds a year, though I have since known it to let for seventy, we took in Thomas Godfrey, a glazier, and his family, who were to pay a considerable part of it to us, and we to board with them. We had scarce opened our letters and put our press in order, before George House, an acquaintance of mine, brought a countryman to us, whom he had met in the street inquiring for a printer. All our cash was now expended in the variety of particulars we had been obliged to procure, and this countryman's five shillings, being our first-fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned; and the gratitude I felt toward House has made me often more ready than perhaps I otherwise should have been to assist young beginners.

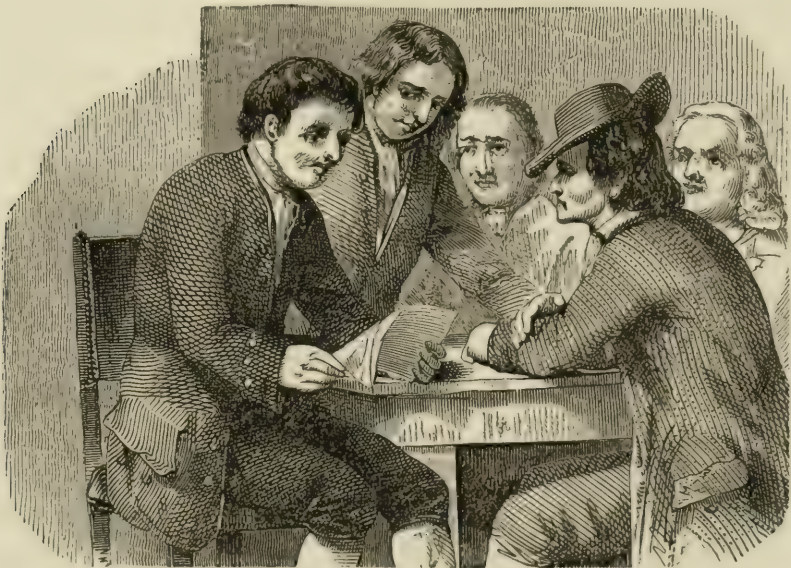
There are croakers in every country, always boding its ruin. Such a one there lived in Philadelphia; a person of note, an elderly man, with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopped me one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing-house. Being answered in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all the appearances of the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious; for they were, in fact, among the things that



would ruin us. Then he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me half melancholy. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This person continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began croaking.

## CHAPTER V.

I SHOULD have mentioned before, that, in the autumn of the preceding year, I had formed most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club for mutual improvement, which we called the JUNTO; we met



on Friday evenings. The rules that I drew up required that every member, in his turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discussed by the company; and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the

direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory; and, to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinions, or direct contradiction, were after some time made contraband, and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties.

The first members were Joseph Breintnal, a copier of deeds for the scriveners, a good-natured, friendly, middle-aged man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable; very ingenious in making little knickknackeries, and of sensible conversation.

Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught mathematician, great in his way, and afterward inventor of what is now called *Hadley's Quadrant*.<sup>\*</sup> But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing companion; as, like most great mathematicians I have met with, he expected universal precision in every thing said, or was for ever denying or distinguishing upon trifles, to the disturbance of all conversation. He soon left us.

<sup>\*</sup> Godfrey died in 1749, and was buried in Germantown. In 1838 his remains were removed from Germantown to Laurel Hill, a beautiful cemetery near Philadelphia, at the charge of Mr. John F. Watson, the well-known annalist. On the 27th of May, 1843, the Mercantile Library Company of Philadelphia noticed, by appropriate ceremonies, the completion of a monument, which that association, aided by other citizens of Philadelphia and Germantown, had caused to be erected. The monument is a truncated cone, bearing appropriate devices, and inscriptions asserting his claim to the honor of the invention. The orator of the day, Gouverneur Emerson, Esq., in an appropriate address, cited the facts which establish the claim of Godfrey to an invention, the merit of which Hadley surreptitiously obtained by copying Godfrey's instrument.



Nicholas Scull, a surveyor, afterward surveyor-general, who loved books, and sometimes made a few verses.

William Parsons, bred a shoemaker, but, loving reading, had acquired a considerable share of mathematics, which he first studied with a view to astrology, and afterward laughed at it. He also became surveyor-general.

William Maugridge, joiner, but a most exquisite mechanic, and a solid, sensible man.

Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb I have characterized before.

Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, and witty; a lover of punning and of his friends.

Lastly, William Coleman, then a merchant's clerk, about my age, who had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart, and the exactest morals of almost any man I ever met with. He became afterward a merchant of great note, and one of our provincial judges. Our friendship continued without interruption to his death, upward of forty years; and the club continued almost as long, and was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics that then existed in the province; for our queries, which were read the week preceding their discussion, put us upon reading with attention on the several subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose; and here, too, we acquired better habits of conversation, every thing being studied in our rules which might prevent our disgusting each other. Hence the long con-

tinuance of the club, which I shall have frequent occasion to speak further of hereafter.

But my giving this account of it here is to show something of the interest I had, every one of these exerting themselves in recommending business to us. Breintnal particularly procured us from the Quakers the printing of forty sheets of their history, the rest being to be done by Keimer; and upon these we worked exceedingly hard, for the price was low. It was a folio, *pro patriâ* size, in pica, with long primer notes. I composed a sheet a day, and Meredith worked it off at press; it was often eleven at night, and sometimes later, before I had finished my distribution for the next day's work, for the little jobs sent in by our other friends now and then put us back. But so determined I was to continue doing a sheet a day of the folio, that one night, when, having imposed my forms, I thought my day's work over, one of them by accident was broken, and two pages reduced to *pi*, I immediately distributed and composed it over again before I went to bed; and this industry, visible to our neighbors, began to give us character and credit; particularly, I was told, that mention being made of the new printing-office at the merchants' every-night club, the general opinion was that it must fail, there being already two printers in the place, Keimer and Bradford; but Dr. Baird (whom you and I saw many years after at his native place, St. Andrew's in Scotland) gave a contrary opinion: "For the industry of that Franklin," said he, "is superior to any thing I ever saw of the kind

I see him still at work when I go home from the club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed." This struck the rest, and we soon after had offers from one of them to supply us with stationery; but as yet we did not choose to engage in shop business.

I mention this industry more particularly and the more freely, though it seems to be talking in my own praise, that those of my posterity, who shall read it, may know the use of that virtue, when they see its effects in my favor throughout this relation.

George Webb, who had found a female friend that lent him wherewith to purchase his time of Keimer, now came to offer himself as a journeyman to us. We could not then employ him; but I foolishly let him know as a secret that I soon intended to begin a newspaper, and might then have work for him. My hopes of success, as I told him, were founded on this, that the then only newspaper, printed by Bradford, was a paltry thing, wretchedly managed, no way entertaining, and yet was profitable to him; I therefore freely thought a good paper would scarcely fail of good encouragement. I requested Webb not to mention it; but he told it to Keimer, who immediately, to be beforehand with me, published proposals for one himself, on which Webb was to be employed. I was vexed at this; and, to counteract them, not being able to commence our paper, I wrote several amusing pieces for Bradford's paper, under the title of the *BUSY BODY*, which Breintnal continued some months. By this means the atten-



tion of the public was fixed on that paper, and Keimer's proposals, which we burlesqued and ridiculed, were disregarded. He began his paper, however, and, before carrying it on three quarters of a year, with at most only ninety subscribers, he offered it me for a trifle; and I, having been ready some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly; and it proved in a few years extremely profitable to me.\*

I perceive that I am apt to speak in the singular number, though our partnership still continued; it may be that, in fact, the whole management of the business lay upon me. Meredith was no compositor, a poor pressman, and seldom sober. My friends



\* This was the Pennsylvania Gazette, of which Franklin and Meredith assumed the publication in 1729. It is related of Franklin that, some of his patrons taking exceptions to his course, he invited them to sup with him, and talk the matter over. The only provision which he made for supper was a pitcher of water, and two coarse meal puddings, vulgarly denominated *saw-dust*. When he found, as he expected, that his fastidious friends could not master such fare, he gave them the moral of the acted parable in these words: "*My friends, any one who can subsist, as I can, on saw-dust pudding and water, needs no man's patronage.*"

lamented my connection with him, but I was to make the best of it.

Our first papers made quite a different appearance from any before in the province; a better type, and better printed; but some remarks of my writing, on the dispute then going on between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal people, occasioned the paper and the manager of it to be much talked of, and in a few weeks brought them all to be our subscribers.

Their example was followed by many, and our number went on growing continually. This was one of the first good effects of having learned a little to scribble; another was, that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of those who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient to oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the votes, and laws, and other public business. He had printed an address of the House to the governor, in a coarse, blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference: it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

Among my friends in the House I must not forget Mr. Hamilton, before mentioned, who was then returned from England, and had a seat in it. He interested himself for me strongly in that instance, as he did in many others afterward, continuing his patronage till his death.\*

\* Franklin, where he could not fully satisfy what he considered in

Mr. Vernon, about this time, put me in mind of the debt I owed him, but did not press me. I wrote to him an ingenuous letter of acknowledgment, craving his forbearance a little longer, which he allowed me. As soon as I was able, I paid the principal with the interest, and many thanks; so that *erratum* was in some degree corrected.

But now another difficulty came upon me which I had never the least reason to expect. Mr. Meredith's father, who was to have paid for our printing-house, according to the expectations given me, was able to advance only one hundred pounds currency, which had been paid; and a hundred more were due to the merchant, who grew impatient, and sued us all. We gave bail, but saw that, if the money could not be raised in time, the suit must soon come to a judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects must, with us, be ruined, as the press and letters must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price.

In this distress two true friends, whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever shall forget while I can remember any thing, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from me, offered each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the

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gratitude due the parent, remembered the children. He procured for the son of Mr. Hamilton five hundred pounds after his father's death; and to a descendant of Mr. Vernon he rendered important services while residing in France as minister from the United States.



partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the street, playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit. These two friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace. I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remained of the Merediths' fulfilling their part of our agreement, because I thought myself under great obligation to them for what they had done, and would do if they could; but, if they finally failed in their performance, and our partnership must be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends.

Thus the matter rested for some time, when I said to my partner, "Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business." "No," said he, "my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him further. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment; you may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty

pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands." I agreed to this proposal; it was drawn up in writing, signed, and sealed immediately. I gave him what he demanded, and he went soon after to Carolina, whence he sent me next year two long letters, containing the best account that had been given of that country, the climate, the soil, and husbandry, for in those matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave great satisfaction to the public.

As soon as he was gone, I recurred to my two friends; and because I would not give an unkind preference to either, I took half of what each had offered and I wanted of one, and half of the other; paid off the company's debts, and went on with the business in my own name, advertising that the partnership was dissolved. I think this was in or about the year 1729.\*

About this time there was a cry among the people for more paper money, only fifteen thousand pounds being extant in the province, and that soon to be sunk. The wealthy inhabitants opposed any addition, being against all paper currency, from the apprehension that it would depreciate, as it had done in New England, to the injury of all creditors. We had discussed this point in our Junto, where I was on the side of an addition, being persuaded that the first small sum struck in 1723 had done much

\* By the agreement of dissolution, still extant, it appears that it took place July 14th, 1730

good by increasing the trade, employment, and number of inhabitants in the province, since I now saw all the old houses inhabited, and many new ones building; whereas I remembered well, when I first walked about the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, I saw many of the houses in Walnut-street, between Second and Front streets, with bills on their doors, "*To be let ;*" and many likewise in Chestnut-street and other streets, which made me think the inhabitants of the city were one after another deserting it.

Our debates possessed me so fully of the subject, that I wrote and printed an anonymous pamphlet on it, entitled "*The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency.*" It was well received by the common people in general; but the rich men disliked it, for it increased and strengthened the clamor for more money, and they happening to have no writers among them that were able to answer it, their opposition slackened, and the point was carried by a majority in the House. My friends there, who considered I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me by employing me in printing the money; a very profitable job, and a great help to me. This was another advantage gained by my being able to write.

The utility of this currency became by time and experience so evident, that the principles upon which it was founded were never afterward much disputed; so that it grew soon to fifty-five thousand pounds, and in 1739 to eighty thousand pounds, trade, building, and inhabitants all the while increasing,



though I now think there are limits beyond which the quantity may be hurtful.

I soon after obtained, through my friend Hamilton, the printing of the Newcastle paper money, another profitable job, as I then thought it; small things appearing great to those in small circumstances; and these, to me, were really great advantages, as they were great encouragements. Mr. Hamilton procured for me, also, the printing of the laws and votes of that government, which continued in my hands as long as I followed the business.

I now opened a small stationer's shop. I had in it blanks of all kinds, the correctest that ever appeared among us. I was assisted in that by my friend Breintnal. I had also paper, parchment, chapmen's books, &c. One Whitemarsh, a compositor I had known in London, an excellent workman, now came to me, and worked with me constantly and diligently; and I took an apprentice, the son of Aquila Rose.

I began now gradually to pay off the debt I was under for the printing-house. In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid the appearances to the contrary. I dressed plain, and was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, was private, and gave no scandal; and, to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the



stores through the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom ; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on prosperously. In the mean time, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forced to sell his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years in very poor circumstances.

His apprentice, David Harry, whom I had instructed while I worked with him, set up in his place at Philadelphia, having bought his materials. I was at first apprehensive of a powerful rival in Harry, as his friends were very able, and had a good deal of interest. I therefore proposed a partnership to him, which he, fortunately for me, rejected with scorn. He was very proud, dressed like a gentle

man, lived expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business; upon which, all business left him; and, finding nothing to do, he followed Keimer to Barbadoes, taking the printing-house with him. There this apprentice employed his former master as a journeyman; they quarreled often, and Harry went continually behindhand, and at length was obliged to sell his types and return to country work in Pennsylvania. The person who bought them employed Keimer to use them, but a few years after he died.

There remained now no other printer in Philadelphia but the old Bradford; but he was rich and easy, did a little business by straggling hands, but was not anxious about it. However, as he held the postoffice, it was imagined he had better opportunities of obtaining news; his paper was thought a better distributor of advertisements than mine, and therefore had many more, which was a profitable thing to him, and a disadvantage to me; for, though I did indeed receive and send papers by the post, yet the public opinion was otherwise, for what I did send was by bribing the riders, who took them privately, Bradford being unkind enough to forbid it, which occasioned some resentment on my part; and I thought so meanly of the practice, that, when I afterward came into his situation, I took care never to imitate it.

I had hitherto continued to board with Godfrey, who lived in a part of my house with his wife and children, and had one side of the shop for his glazier's



business, though he worked little, being always absorbed in his mathematics. Mrs. Godfrey projected a match for me with a relation's daughter, took opportunities of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensued, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encouraged me by continual invitations to supper, and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey managed our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with their daughter as would pay off my remaining debt for the printing-house, which I believe was not then above a hundred pounds. She brought me word they had no such sum to spare; I said they might mortgage their house in the loan-office. The answer to this, after some days, was, that they did not approve the match; that, on inquiry of Bradford, they had been informed the printing business was not a profitable one; the types would soon be worn out, and more wanted; that Keimer and David Harry had failed one after the other, and I should probably soon follow them; and, therefore, I was forbidden the house, and the daughter was shut up.

Whether this was a real change of sentiment or only artifice, on a supposition of our being too far engaged in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage, which would leave them at liberty to give or withhold what they pleased, know not; but I suspected the motive, resented it, and went no more. Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterward some more favorable accounts of their disposi

tion, and would have drawn me on again ; but I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys; we differed, and they removed, leaving me the whole house, and I resolved to take no more inmates.

But this affair having turned my thoughts to marriage, I looked round me and made overtures of acquaintance in other places ; but soon found that, the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect money with a wife, unless with such a one as I should not otherwise think agreeable. A friendly correspondence as neighbors had continued between me and Miss Read's family, who all had a regard for me from the time of my first lodging in their house. I was often invited there and consulted in their affairs, wherein I sometimes was of service. I pitied poor Miss Read's unfortunate situation, who was generally dejected, sel-



dom cheerful, and avoided company. I considered my giddiness and inconstancy when in London as in a great degree the cause of her unhappiness, though the mother was good enough to think the fault more her own than mine, as she had prevented our marrying before I went thither, and persuaded the other match in my absence. Our mutual affection was revived, but there were now great objections to our union. The match was indeed looked upon as invalid, a preceding wife being said to be living in England; but this could not easily be proved, because of the distance, &c.; and, though there was a report of his death, it was not certain. Then, though it should be true, he had left many debts, which his successor might be called upon to pay. We ventured, however, over all these difficulties, and I took her to wife, September 1st, 1730. None of the inconveniences happened that we had apprehended; she proved a good and faithful helpmate, assisted me much by attending to the shop; we throve together, and ever mutually endeavored to make each other happy. Thus I corrected that great *erratum* as well as I could.

About this time, our club meeting, not at a tavern, but in a little room of Mr. Grace's, set apart for that purpose, a proposition was made by me, that, since our books were often referred to in our disquisitions upon the queries, it might be convenient to us to have them all together where we met, that upon occasion they might be consulted; and by thus clubbing our books in a common library, we should,



while we liked to keep them together, have each of us the advantage of using the books of all the other members, which would be nearly as beneficial as if each owned the whole. It was liked and agreed to, and we filled one end of the room with such books as we could best spare. The number was not so great as we expected; and, though they had been of great use, yet some inconveniences occurring for want of due care of them, the collection, after about a year, was separated, and each took his books home again.

And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. I drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our great scrivener, Brockden, and, by the help of my friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with, and ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term our company was to continue. We afterward obtained a charter, the company being increased to one hundred: this was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and continually goes on increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges.

## CHAPTER VI.

[THE last chapter concludes that part of Dr. Franklin's autobiography which was commenced by him at Twyford, and continued from time to time, as his leisure permitted, until the commencement of the Revolutionary war, and the important public occupations in which the author was engaged compelled him to lay it aside. The first part was written without an eye to publication, or, at any rate, with a principal view to the information of his son. The resumption was undertaken after the close of the Revolutionary war, at the earnest solicitation of friends; and there is a marked difference in the style of the work, distinguishing it from the earlier portions.

The letters, with a reference to which the narrative, as resumed, commences, were from his friends Abel James and Benjamin Vaughan. Mr. James and Mr. Vaughan had each seen the early part of the narrative, it would seem, by some fortunate accident, for Mr. Vaughan speaks of the "twenty-three sheets in Franklin's own handwriting" as *recovered* by Mr. James. Both these gentlemen strongly urged Dr. Franklin to a continuation and publication of his memoirs; nor were personal solicitations from others wanting. While Dr. Franklin was in France, as plenipotentiary from the United States, he show-

ed the autobiography to some friends there, and one of them translated it into French. This French translation was published soon after Dr. Franklin's death, at Paris, and shortly after that a most excellent translation into English appeared in London. That edition was reprinted in this country, even after the original was published by his grandson, of which this is a copy. The continuation is headed by the author, "Continuation of the account of my Life, begun at Passy, near Paris, 1784."]

It is some time since I received the above letters, but I have been too busy till now to think of complying with the request they contain. It might, too, be much better done if I were at home among my papers, which would aid my memory, and help to ascertain dates; but my return being uncertain, and having just now a little leisure, I will endeavor to recollect and write what I can; if I live to get home, it may there be corrected and improved.

Not having any copy here of what is already written, I know not whether an account is given of the means I used to establish the Philadelphia public library, which, from a small beginning, is now become so considerable, though I remember to have come down to near the time of that transaction (1730). I will therefore begin here with an account of it, which may be struck out if found to have been already given.

At the time I established myself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the



colonies to the southward of Boston. In New York and Philadelphia the printers were indeed stationers, but they sold only paper, almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who loved reading were obliged to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto had each a few. We had left the alehouse, where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I proposed that we should all of us bring our books to that room,



where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wished to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us.

Finding the advantage of this little collection, I proposed to render the benefit from the books more common, by commencing a public subscription li-

brary. I drew a sketch of the plan and rules that would be necessary, and got a skillful conveyancer, Mr. Charles Brockden, to put the whole in form of articles of agreement to be subscribed, by which each subscriber engaged to pay a certain sum down for the first purchase of the books, and an annual contribution for increasing them. So few were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able, with great industry, to find more than fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, willing to pay down for this purpose forty shillings each, and ten shillings per annum. With this little fund we began. The books were imported; the library was opened one day in the week for lending them to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns, and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; and our people, having no public amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books, and in a few years were observed by strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in other countries.

When we were about to sign the above-mentioned articles, which were to be binding on us, our heirs, &c., for fifty years, Mr. Brockden, the scrivener, said to us, "You are young men, but it is scarcely probable that any of you will live to see the expiration of the term fixed in the instrument." A



number of us, however, are yet living ; but the instrument was after a few years rendered null by a charter that incorporated and gave perpetuity to the company.\*

The objections and reluctances I met with in soliciting the subscriptions, made me soon feel the impropriety of presenting one's self as the proposer of any useful project, that might be supposed to raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors, when one has need of their assistance to accomplish that project. I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a scheme of a *number of friends*, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practised it on such occasions ; and, from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterward be amply repaid. If it remains a while uncertain to whom the merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself may be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you justice by plucking those assumed feathers, and restoring them to their right owner.

\* This library, founded in 1731, was incorporated in 1742. By the addition made to it of a large library left by Dr. James Logan, and by annual purchases, the Philadelphia Library now numbers nearly 60,000 volumes. The spacious and handsome edifice, corner of Fifth and Library streets, in which the library is now kept, was erected just before Franklin's death. The marble statue which occupies a niche in front, was presented to the company by Mr. William Bingham. It was executed in Italy of Carrara marble, at a cost of 500 guineas.



This library afforded me the means of improvement by constant study, for which I set apart an hour or two each day, and thus repaired in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended for me. Reading was the only amusement I allowed myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolics of any kind; and my industry in my business continued as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had two competitors to contend with for business, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "*Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men,*" I thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged me, though I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before kings*, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before *five*, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

We have an English proverb that says, "*He that would thrive, must ask his wife.*" It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-



makers, &c. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was for a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the



enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value.

I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; but, though some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as *the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, &c.*, appearing to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day, I never was without some religious principles. I never doubted, for instance, the existence of a Deity; that he made the world, and governed it by his providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crimes will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteemed the essentials of every religion; and, being to be found in all the religions we had in our country, I respected them all, though with different degrees of respect, as I found them more or less mixed with other articles, which, without any tendency to inspire, promote, or confirm morality, served principally to divide us, and make us unfriendly to one another. This respect to all, with an opinion that the worst had some good effects, induced me to avoid all discourse that might tend to lessen the



good opinion another might have of his own religion; and as our province increased in people, and new places of worship were continually wanted, and generally erected by voluntary contribution, my mite for such purposes, whatever might be the sect, was never refused.

Though I seldom attended any public worship, I had still an opinion of its propriety, and of its utility when rightly conducted, and I regularly paid my annual subscription for the support of the only Presbyterian minister or meeting we had in Philadelphia. He used to visit me sometimes as a friend, and admonish me to attend his administrations, and I was now and then prevailed on to do so, once for five Sundays successively. Had he been in my opinion a good preacher, perhaps I might have continued, notwithstanding the occasion I had for the Sunday's leisure in my course of study; but his discourses were chiefly either polemic arguments, or explications of the peculiar doctrines of our sect, and were all to me very dry, uninteresting, and unedifying, since not a single moral principle was inculcated or enforced, their aim seeming to be rather to make us *Presbyterians* than *good citizens*.

At length he took for his text that verse of the fourth chapter to the Philippians, "*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue, or any praise, think on these things.*" And I imagined, in a sermon on such a text, we could not miss of having some morality. But he confined himself to five points

only, as meant by the apostle: 1. Keeping holy the Sabbath day. 2. Being diligent in reading the holy Scriptures. 3. Attending duly the public worship. 4. Partaking of the Sacrament. 5. Paying a due respect to God's ministers. These might be all good things; but, as they were not the kind of good things that I expected from that text, I despaired of ever meeting with them from any other, was disgusted, and attended his preaching no more. I had some years before composed a little Liturgy, or form of prayer, for my own private use (in 1728), entitled, *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*. I returned to the use of this, and went no more to the public assemblies. My conduct might be blamable, but I leave it, without attempting further to excuse it; my present purpose being to relate facts, and not to make apologies for them.\*

It was about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at *moral perfection*. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time, and to conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not *always* do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my attention was taken up, and

\* In a letter written to his daughter, we find Dr. Franklin impressing upon her mind the necessity and duty of attending church, and of *not* letting disgust toward a preacher operate against the usefulness of his discourse. "Pure water," the philosopher remarks, "is often found to have come through very dirty earth."

employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore tried the following method.

In the various enumerations of the *moral virtues* I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. *Temperance*, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of *virtues*, with their precepts, were,

1. TEMPERANCE.—Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.



2. SILENCE.—Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. ORDER.—Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. RESOLUTION.—Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. FRUGALITY.—Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.

6. INDUSTRY.—Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. SINCERITY.—Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. JUSTICE.—Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. MODERATION.—Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. CLEANLINESS.—Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. TRANQUILLITY.—Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. CHASTITY. . . . .

13. HUMILITY.—Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on *one* of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone through the thirteen; and, as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged

them with that view, as they stand above. *Temperance* first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and a guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, *Silence* would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ear than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and jesting, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave *Silence* the second place. This and the next, *Order*, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. *Resolution*, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; *Frugality* and *Industry* relieving me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of *Sincerity* and *Justice*, &c., &c. Conceiving then, that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his *Golden Verses*, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red

lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.\*

*Form of the pages.*

TEMPERANCE.

Eat not to dullness ; drink not to elevation.

	Sun.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	S.
Tem.							
Sil.	*	*		*		*	
Ord.	*	*			*	*	*
Res.		*				*	
Fru.		*				*	
Ind.			*				
Sinc.							
Jus.							
Mod.							
Clea.							
Tran.							
Chas.							
Hum.							

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid every the least offense against *Temperance*, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I supposed the habit of that virtue so much strengthened, and its opposite weakened, that I might

\* This "little book" is dated 1st July, 1733.



venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could get through a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all



the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination.

This my little book had for its motto these lines from Addison's *Cato* :

“Here will I hold. If there’s a power above us  
 (And that there is, all nature cries aloud  
 Through all her works), He must delight in virtue ;  
 And that which he delights in must be happy.”

Another from Cicero,

“O vitæ Philosophia dux ! O virtutum indagatrix expuitrixque vitiorum ! Unus dies, bene et ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati est anteponeendus.”

Another from the Proverbs of Solomon, speaking of wisdom or virtue :

“Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

And conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it ; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination, for daily use.

“O powerful Goodness ! bountiful Father ! merciful Guide ! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me.”

I used also sometimes a little prayer which I took from Thomson’s *Poems*, viz. :

“Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme !  
 O teach me what is good ; teach me Thyself !  
 Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,  
 From every low pursuit ; and feed my soul  
 With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure ;  
 Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss !”

The precept of *Order* requiring that *every part of my business should have its allotted time*, one page in my little book contained the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day.

## SCHEME.

		Hours.	
MORNING.	The <i>Question.</i> What good shall I do this day?	5	Rise, wash, and address <i>Pow-</i>
		6	<i>erful Goodness!</i> Contrive day's
		7	business, and take the resolution
			of the day; prosecute the pres-
			ent study, and breakfast
		8	Work.
		9	
		10	
		11	
NOON.		12	Read, or look over my ac-
		1	
AFTERNOON.		2	Work.
		3	
		4	
		5	
EVENING.	The <i>Question.</i> What good have I done to-day?	6	Put things in their places.
		7	Supper. Music or diversion, or
		8	conversation. Examination of
		9	the day
NIGHT.		10	Sleep.
		11	
		12	
		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	

I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with



red ink, that made a durable stain, and on those lines I marked my faults with a black-lead pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went through one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

My scheme of *Order* gave me the most trouble; and I found that, though it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. Order, too, with regard to places for things, papers, &c., I found extremely difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to *method*, and, having an exceedingly good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while

the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without further grinding. "No," said the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by-and-by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," said the man, "but *I think I like a speckled ax best.*" And I believe this may



have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that "*a speckled ax is best*;" for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind



of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous ; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated ; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to *Order* ; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it ; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, though they never reach the wished-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence ; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution ; to *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citi-



zen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his young acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.

It will be remarked that, though my scheme was not wholly without religion, there was in it no mark of any of the distinguishing tenets of any particular sect. I had purposely avoided them; for, being fully persuaded of the utility and excellency of my method, and that it might be serviceable to people in all religions, and intending some time or other to publish it, I would not have any thing in it that should prejudice any one, of any sect, against it. I proposed writing a little comment on each virtue, in which I would have shown the advantages of possessing it, and the mischiefs attending its opposite vice; I should have called my book *THE ART OF VIRTUE*, because it would have shown the means and manner of obtaining virtue, which would have distinguished it from the mere exhortation to be good, that does not instruct and indicate the means, but is like the apostle's man of verbal charity, who, without showing to the naked and hungry how or where they might get clothes or victuals, only

exhorted them to be fed and clothed.—*James*, ii., 15, 16.

But it so happened that my intention of writing and publishing this comment was never fulfilled. I had, indeed, from time to time, put down short hints of the sentiments and reasonings to be made use of in it, some of which I have still by me; but the necessary close attention to private business in the earlier part of life, and public business since, have occasioned my postponing it; for, it being connected in my mind with *a great and extensive project*, that required the whole man to execute, and which an unforeseen succession of employs prevented my attending to, it has hitherto remained unfinished.

In this piece it was my design to explain and enforce this doctrine, *that vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful*, the nature of man alone considered; that it was, therefore, every one's interest to be virtuous who wished to be happy even in this world; and I should, from this circumstance (there being always in the world a number of rich merchants, nobility, states, and princes, who have need of honest instruments for the management of their affairs, and such being so rare), have endeavored to convince young persons that no qualities are so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of *probity* and *integrity*.

My list of virtues contained at first but twelve; but a Quaker friend having kindly informed me that

I was generally thought proud; that my pride showed itself frequently in conversation; that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing, and rather insolent, of which he convinced me by mentioning several instances; I determined to endeavor to cure myself, if I could, of this vice or folly among the rest, and I added *Humility* to my list, giving an extensive meaning to the word.

I can not boast of much success in acquiring the *reality* of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbid myself, agreeably to the old laws of our Junto, the use of every word or expression in the language that imported a fixed opinion, such as *certainly, undoubtedly, &c.*, and I adopted, instead of them, *I conceive, I apprehend, or I imagine* a thing to be so or so; or it so *appears to me at present*. When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there *appeared or seemed to me* some difference, &c. I soon found the advantage of this change in my manners; the conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I proposed my opinions procured them a readier reception and less



contradiction; I had less mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevailed with others to give up their mistakes and join with me when I happened to be in the right.

And this mode, which I at first put on with some violence to natural inclination, became at length easy, and so habitual to me, that perhaps for the last fifty years no one has ever heard a dogmatical expression escape me. And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow-citizens when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old, and so much influence in public councils when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my point.

In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as *pride*. Disguise it, struggle with it, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be *proud* of my *humility*.

## CHAPTER VII.

[THE last chapter embraces what was written at Passy. The remainder of Franklin's autobiography, so far as he continued it, is endorsed "MEMORANDUM. I am now about to write at home (Philadelphia), August, 1788, but can not have the help expected from my papers, many of them being lost in the war. I have, however, found the following."]

Having mentioned *a great and extensive project* which I had conceived, it seems proper that some account should be here given of that project and its object. Its first rise in my mind appears in the following little paper, accidentally preserved, viz.:

*Observations on my reading history, in the Library, May 9th, 1731.*

"That the great affairs of the world, the wars, and revolutions are carried on and effected by parties.

"That the view of these parties is their present general interest, or what they take to be such.

"That the different views of these different parties occasion all confusion.

"That while a party is carrying on a general design, each man has his particular private interest in view.

"That as soon as a party has gained its general

point, each member becomes intent upon his particular interest; which, thwarting others, breaks that party into divisions, and occasions more confusion.

“That few in public affairs act from a mere view of the good of their country, whatever they may pretend; and, though their actings bring real good to their country, yet men primarily considered that their own and their country’s interest were united, and so did not act from a principle of benevolence.

“That fewer still, in public affairs, act with a view to the good of mankind.

“There seems to me at present to be great occasion for raising a *United Party for Virtue*, by forming the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be governed by suitable good and wise rules, which good and wise men may probably be more unanimous in their obedience to, than common people are to common laws.

“I at present think that whoever attempts this aright, and is well qualified, can not fail of pleasing God, and of meeting with success.”

Revolving this project in my mind, as to be undertaken hereafter, when my circumstances should afford me the necessary leisure, I put down from time to time, on pieces of paper, such thoughts as occurred to me respecting it. Most of these are lost; but I find one purporting to be the substance of an intended creed, containing, as I thought, the essentials of every known religion, and being free of every thing that might shock the professors of any religion. It is expressed in these words, viz. :



“That there is one God, who made all things.

“That he governs the world by his providence.

“That he ought to be worshiped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

“But that the most acceptable service to God is doing good to man.

“That the soul is immortal.

“And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter.”

My ideas at that time were, that the sect should be begun and spread at first among young and single men only; that each person to be initiated should not only declare his assent to such creed, but should have exercised himself with the thirteen weeks' examination and practice of the virtues, as in the before-mentioned model; that the existence of such a society should be kept a secret, till it was become considerable, to prevent solicitations for the admission of improper persons, but that the members should each of them search among his acquaintance for ingenious, well-disposed youths, to whom, with prudent caution, the scheme should be gradually communicated; that the members should engage to afford their advice, assistance, and support to each other in promoting one another's interest, business, and advancement in life; that, for distinction, we should be called **THE SOCIETY OF THE FREE AND EASY**: free, as being, by the general practice and habits of the virtues, free from the dominion of vice; and particularly by the practice of industry and frugality, free from debts, which ex-

poses a man to constraint, and a species of slavery to his creditors.

This is as much as I can now recollect of the project, except that I communicated it in part to two young men, who adopted it with some enthusiasm; but my then narrow circumstances, and the necessity I was under of sticking close to my business, occasioned my postponing the further prosecution of it at that time; and my multifarious occupations, public and private, induced me to continue postponing, so that it has been omitted till I have no longer strength or activity left sufficient for such an enterprise; though I am still of opinion it was a practicable scheme, and might have been very useful, by forming a great number of good citizens; and I was not discouraged by the seeming magnitude of the undertaking, as I have always thought that one man of tolerable abilities may work great changes, and accomplish great affairs among mankind, if he first forms a good plan, and, cutting off all amusements or other employments that would divert his attention, make the execution of that same plan his sole study and business.

In 1732 I first published my Almanac, under the name of *Richard Saunders*; it was continued by me about twenty-five years, and commonly called *Poor Richard's Almanac*. I endeavored to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand, that I reaped considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand.\*

\* The first year that the Almanac was printed was for 1733. The first

And observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the province being without it, I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occurred between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.*

These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and formed into a connected discourse prefixed to the Almanac of 1757, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing all these scattered counsels thus into a focus enabled them to make greater impression. The piece, being uni-

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advertisement of it appeared in December, 1732, rather later in the season than our present almanac makers issue. Three editions of the first number were printed before the end of January; and in after years, though the edition was increased, it was frequently necessary to reprint. We copy the first advertisement from the Pennsylvania Gazette:

“Just published, for 1733, An Almanac, containing the Lunations, Eclipses, Planets’ Motions and Aspects, Weather, Sun and Moon’s Rising and Setting, High Water, &c.; besides many pleasant and witty Verses, Jests, and Sayings; Author’s Motive of Writing; Prediction of the Death of his Friend, Mr. Titan Leeds; Moon no Cuckold; Bachelor’s Folly; Parson’s Wine and Baker’s Pudding; Short Visits; Kings and Bears; New Fashions; Game for Kisses; Katherine’s Love; Different Sentiments; Signs of a Tempest; Death of a Fisherman; Conjugal Debate; Men and Melons; The Prodigal; Breakfast in Bed; Oyster Lawsuit, &c. By Richard Saunders, Philomat. Printed and Sold by B. Franklin.”



versally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the American Continent; reprinted in Britain on a large sheet of paper, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in France, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication.

I considered my newspaper, also, as another means of communicating instruction, and in that view frequently reprinted in it extracts from the *Spectator*, and other moral writers; and sometimes published little pieces of my own, which had been first composed for reading in our Junto. Of these are a Socratic dialogue, tending to prove that, whatever might be his parts and abilities, a vicious man could not properly be called a man of sense; and a discourse on self-denial, showing that virtue was not secure till its practice became a *habitude*, and was free from the opposition of contrary inclinations. These may be found in the papers about the beginning of 1735.

In the conduct of my newspaper, I carefully excluded all libeling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I was solicited to insert any thing of that kind, and the writers pleaded, as they generally did, the liberty of the press, and that a newspaper was

like a stage-coach, in which any one who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I would print the piece separately if desired, and the author might have as many copies as he pleased to distribute himself, but that I would not take upon me to spread his detraction; and that, having contracted with my subscribers to furnish them with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with private altercation, in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice. Now, many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters among ourselves, augmenting animosity even to the producing of duels; and are, moreover, so indiscreet as to print scurrilous reflections on the government of neighboring states, and even on the conduct of our best national allies, which may be attended with the most pernicious consequences. These things I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices, but refuse steadily, as they may see by my example that such a course of conduct will not, on the whole, be injurious to their interests.

In 1733 I sent one of my journeymen to Charleston, South Carolina, where a printer was wanting. I furnished him with a press and letters, on an agreement of partnership, by which I was to receive one third of the profits of the business, paying one third of the expense. He was a man of learning, but

ignorant in matters of account; and, though he sometimes made me remittances, I could get no account from him, nor any satisfactory state of our partnership while he lived. On his decease, the business was continued by his widow, who, being



born and bred in Holland, where, as I have been informed, the knowledge of accounts makes a part of female education, she not only sent me as clear a statement as she could find of the transactions past, but continued to account with the greatest regularity and exactness every quarter afterward, and managed the business with such success, that she not only reputationably brought up a family of children, but, at the expiration of the term, was able to purchase of me the printing-house, and establish her son in it.

I mention this affair chiefly for the sake of recommending that branch of education for our young women, as likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing, by preserving them from losses by im-



position of crafty men, and enabling them to continue, perhaps, a profitable mercantile house, with established correspondence, till a son is grown up fit to undertake and go on with it, to the lasting advantage and enriching of the family.

About the year 1734 there arrived among us a young Presbyterian preacher, named Hemphill, who delivered with a good voice, and apparently extempore, most excellent discourses, which drew together considerable numbers of different persuasions, who joined in admiring them. Among the rest, I became one of his constant hearers, his sermons pleasing me, as they had little of the dogmatical kind, but inculcated strongly the practice of virtue, or what in the religious style are called *good works*. Those, however, of our congregation, who considered themselves as orthodox Presbyterians, disapproved his doctrine, and were joined by most of the old ministers, who arraigned him of heterodoxy before the synod, in order to have him silenced. I became his zealous partisan, and contributed all I could to raise a party in his favor, and combated for him a while with some hopes of success. There was much scribbling *pro* and *con* upon the occasion; and finding that, though an elegant preacher, he was but a poor writer, I wrote for him two or three pamphlets, and a piece in the *Gazette* of April, 1735. Those pamphlets, as is generally the case with controversial writings, though eagerly read at the time, were soon out of vogue, and I question whether a single copy of them now exists.

During the contest an unlucky occurrence hurt his cause exceedingly. One of our adversaries having heard him preach a sermon that was much admired, thought he had somewhere read the sermon before, or at least a part of it. On searching, he found that part quoted at length, in one of the *British Reviews*, from a discourse of Dr. Foster's. This detection gave many of our party disgust, who accordingly abandoned his cause, and occasioned our more speedy discomfiture in the synod. I stuck by him, however; I rather approved his giving us good sermons composed by others, than bad ones of his own manufacture, though the latter was the practice of our common teachers. He afterward acknowledged to me that none of those he preached were his own; adding, that his memory was such as enabled him to retain and repeat any sermon after once reading only. On our defeat, he left us in search elsewhere of better fortune, and I quitted the congregation, never attending it after, though I continued many years my subscription for the support of its ministers.

I had begun in 1733 to study languages; I soon made myself so much a master of the French as to be able to read the books in that language with ease. I then undertook the Italian. An acquaintance, who was learning it, used often to tempt me to play chess with him. Finding this took up too much of the time I had to spare for study, I at length refused to play any more, unless on this condition, that the victor in every game should have a right to impose a task, either of parts of the grammar to be got by



heart, or in translations, which tasks the vanquished was to perform upon honor before our next meeting. As we played pretty equally, we thus beat one another into that language. I afterward, with a little pains-taking, acquired as much of the Spanish as to read their books also.

I have already mentioned that I had only one year's instruction in a Latin school, and that when very young, after which I neglected that language entirely. But, when I had attained an acquaintance with the French, Italian, and Spanish, I was surprised to find, on looking over a Latin Testament, that I understood more of that language than I had imagined, which encouraged me to apply myself again to the study of it, and I met with more success, as those preceding languages had greatly smoothed my way.

From these circumstances, I have thought there is some inconsistency in our common mode of teaching languages. We are told that it is proper to be-



gin first with the Latin, and, having acquired that, it will be more easy to attain those modern languages which are derived from it; and yet we do not begin with the Greek, in order more easily to acquire the Latin. It is true that, if we can clamber and get to the top of a staircase without using the steps, we shall more easily gain them in descending; but certainly, if we begin with the lowest, we shall with more ease ascend to the top; and I would therefore offer it to the consideration of those who superintend the education of our youth, whether, since many of those who begin with the Latin quit the same after spending some years without having made any great proficiency, and what they have learned becomes almost useless, so that their time has been lost, it would not have been better to have begun with the French, proceeding to the Italian and Latin; for, though, after spending the same time, they should quit the study of languages and never arrive at the Latin, they would, however, have acquired another tongue or two, that, being in modern use, might be serviceable to them in common life.

After ten years' absence from Boston, and having become easy in my circumstances, I made a journey thither to visit my relations, which I could not sooner afford. In returning, I called at Newport to see my brother James, then settled there with his printing-house. Our former differences were forgotten, and our meeting was very cordial and affectionate. He was fast declining in health, and requested me that, in case of his death, which he apprehended not far

distant, I would take home his son, then ten years of age, and bring him up to the printing business.



This I accordingly performed, sending him a few years to school before I took him into the office. His mother carried on the business till he was grown up, when I assisted him with an assortment of new types, those of his father being in a manner worn out. Thus it was that I made my brother ample amends for the service I had deprived him of by leaving him so early.

In 1736 I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the small-pox, taken in the common way. I long regretted him bitterly, and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never

forgive themselves if a child died under it; my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and, therefore, that the safer should be chosen.

Our club, the Junto, was found so useful, and afforded such satisfaction to the members, that some were desirous of introducing their friends, which could not well be done without exceeding what we had settled as a convenient number, viz., twelve. We had from the beginning made it a rule to keep our institution a secret, which was pretty well observed; the intention was to avoid applications of improper persons for admittance, some of whom, perhaps, we might find it difficult to refuse. I was one of those who were against any addition to our number, but, instead of it, made in writing a proposal, that every member separately should endeavor to form a subordinate club, with the same rules respecting queries, &c., and without informing them of the connection with the Junto. The advantages proposed were, the improvement of so many more young citizens by the use of our institutions; our better acquaintance with the general sentiments of the inhabitants on any occasion, as the Junto member might propose what queries we should desire, and was to report to the Junto what passed at his separate club; the promotion of our particular interests in business by more extensive recommendation, and the increase of our influence in public affairs, and our power of doing good by spreading through the several clubs the sentiments of the Junto.



The project was approved, and every member undertook to form his club, but they did not all succeed. Five or six only were completed, which were called by different names, as the *Vine*, the *Union*, the *Band*. They were useful to themselves, and afforded us a good deal of amusement, information, and instruction, besides answering, in some considerable degree, our views of influencing the public on particular occasions, of which I shall give some instances in course of time as they happened.

My first promotion was my being chosen, in 1736, clerk of the General Assembly. The choice was made that year without opposition; but the year following, when I was again proposed (the choice, like that of the members, being annual), a new member made a long speech against me, in order to favor some other candidate. I was, however, chosen, which was the more agreeable to me, as, besides the pay for the immediate service of clerk, the place gave me a better opportunity of keeping up an interest among the members, which secured to me the business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and other occasional jobs for the public, that, on the whole, were very profitable.

I therefore did not like the opposition of this new member, who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to give him, in time, great influence in the House, which, indeed, afterward happened. I did not, however, aim at gaining his favor by paying any servile respect to him, but, after some time, took this other method. Hav-

ing heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting that he would do me the favor of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I returned it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly the sense of the favor. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me, which he had never done before, and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, "*He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.*" And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return, and continue inimical proceedings.

In 1737, Colonel Spotswood, late governor of Virginia, and then postmaster-general, being dissatisfied with the conduct of his deputy at Philadelphia, respecting some negligence in rendering, and want of exactness in framing his accounts, took from him the commission and offered it to me. I accepted it readily, and found it of great advantage; for, though the salary was small, it facilitated the correspondence that improved my newspaper, increased the number demanded, as well as the advertisements to be inserted, so that it came to afford me a considerable income. My old competitor's newspaper declined

proportionably, and I was satisfied without retaliating his refusal, while postmaster, to permit my papers being carried by the riders. Thus he suffered greatly from his neglect in due accounting; and I mention it as a lesson to those young men who may be employed in managing affairs for others, that they should always render accounts, and make remittances, with great clearness and punctuality. The character of observing such a conduct is the most powerful of all recommendations to new employments and increase of business.

I now began to turn my thoughts to public affairs, beginning, however, with small matters. The city watch was one of the first things that I conceived to want regulation. It was managed by the constables of the respective wards in turn; the constable summoned a number of housekeepers to attend him for the night. Those who chose never to attend, paid him six shillings a year to be excused, which was supposed to go to hiring substitutes, but was, in reality, much more than was necessary for that purpose, and made the constablenesship a place of profit; and the constable, for a little drink, often got such ragamuffins about him as a watch, that respectable housekeepers did not choose to mix with. Walking the rounds, too, was often neglected, and most of the nights spent in tippling. I thereupon wrote a paper to be read in the Junto, representing these irregularities, but insisting more particularly on the inequality of this six-shilling tax of the constables, respecting the circumstances of those who



paid it, since a poor widow housekeeper, all whose property to be guarded by the watch did not perhaps exceed the value of fifty pounds, paid as much as the wealthiest merchant, who had thousands of pounds' worth of goods in his stores.

On the whole, I proposed, as a more effectual watch, the hiring of proper men to serve constantly in the business; and as a more equitable way of supporting the charge, the levying a tax that should be proportioned to the property. This idea, being approved by the Junto, was communicated to the other clubs, but as originating in each of them; and though the plan was not immediately carried into execution, yet, by preparing the minds of people for the change, it paved the way for the law obtained a few years after, when the members of our clubs were grown into more influence.

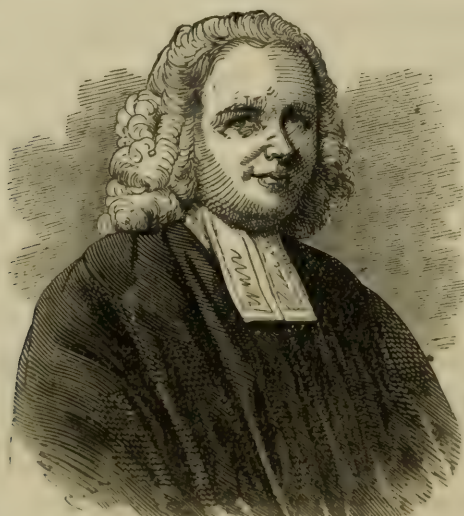
About this time I wrote a paper (first to be read in the Junto, but it was afterward published) on the different accidents and carelessnesses by which houses were set on fire, with cautions against them, and means proposed of avoiding them. This was spoken of as a useful piece, and gave rise to a project, which soon followed it, of forming a company for the more ready extinguishing of fires, and mutual assistance in removing and securing of goods when in danger. Associates in this scheme were presently found, amounting to thirty. Our articles of agreement obliged every member to keep always in good order, and fit for use, a certain number of leathern buckets, with strong bags and baskets (for packing

and transporting of goods), which were to be brought to every fire ; and we agreed about once a month to spend a social evening together, in discoursing and communicating such ideas as occurred to us upon the subject of fires, as might be useful in our conduct on such occasions.

The utility of this institution soon appeared, and many more desiring to be admitted than we thought convenient for one company, they were advised to form another, which was accordingly done ; and thus went on one new company after another, till they became so numerous as to include most of the inhabitants who were men of property ; and now, at the time of my writing this, though upward of fifty years since its establishment, that which I first formed, called the *Union Fire Company*, still subsists, though the first members are all deceased but one, who is older by a year than I am. The fines that have been paid by members for absence at the monthly meetings have been applied to the purchase of fire-engines, ladders, fire-hooks, and other useful implements for each company, so that I question whether there is a city in the world better provided with the means of putting a stop to beginning conflagrations ; and, in fact, since these institutions, the city has never lost by fire more than one or two houses at a time, and the flames have often been extinguished before the house in which they began has been half consumed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

IN 1739 arrived among us from Ireland the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, who had made himself remark-



able there as an itinerant preacher. He was at first permitted to preach in some of our churches; but the clergy, taking a dislike to him, soon refused him their pulpits, and he was obliged to preach in the fields. The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they admired and respected him, notwithstanding his



common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally *half beasts and half devils*. It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.

And it being found inconvenient to assemble in the open air, subject to its inclemencies, the building of a house to meet in was no sooner proposed, and persons appointed to receive contributions, than sufficient sums were soon received to procure the ground and erect the building, which was one hundred feet long and seventy broad; and the work was carried on with such spirit as to be finished in a much shorter time than could have been expected. Both house and ground were vested in trustees, expressly for the use of *any preacher of any religious persuasion* who might desire to say something to the people at Philadelphia; the design in building being not to accommodate any particular sect, but the inhabitants in general; so that even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service.

Mr. Whitefield, on leaving us, went preaching all the way through the colonies to Georgia. The settlement of that province had been lately begun, but, instead of being made with hardy, industrious husbandmen, accustomed to labor, the only people fit

for such an enterprise, it was with families of broken shop-keepers and other insolvent debtors, many of indolent and idle habits, taken out of the jails, who, being set down in the woods, unqualified for clearing land, and unable to endure the hardships of a new settlement, perished in numbers, leaving many helpless children unprovided for. The sight of their miserable situation inspired the benevolent heart of Mr. Whitefield with the idea of building an Orphan House there, in which they might be supported and educated. Returning northward, he preached up this charity, and made large collections, for his eloquence had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers, of which I myself was an instance.

I did not disapprove of the design, but, as Georgia was then destitute of materials and workmen, and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia at a great expense, I thought it would have been better to have built the house at Philadelphia, and brought the children to it. This I advised; but he was resolute in his first project, rejected my counsel, and I therefore refused to contribute. I happened soon after to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determ-

ined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all. At this sermon there was also one of our club, who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came from home. Toward the conclusion of the discourse however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbor, who stood near him, to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was fortunately made to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, "At any other time, Friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right senses."

Some of Mr. Whitefield's enemies affected to suppose that he would apply these collections to his own private emolument; but I, who was intimately acquainted with him, being employed in printing his Sermons and Journals, never had the least suspicion of his integrity, but am to this day decidedly of opinion that he was in all his conduct a perfectly *honest man*; and methinks my testimony in his favor ought to have the more weight, as we had no religious connection. He used, indeed, sometimes to pray for my conversion, but never had the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard. Ours was a mere civil friendship, sincere on both sides, and lasted to his death.



The following instance will show the terms on which we stood. Upon one of his arrivals from England at Boston, he wrote to me that he should come soon to Philadelphia, but knew not where he could lodge when there, as he understood his old friend and host, Mr. Benezet, was removed to Germantown. My answer was, "You know my house; if you can make shift with its scanty accommodations, you will be most heartily welcome." He replied, that if I made that kind offer for *Christ's* sake, I should not miss of a reward. And I returned, "Don't let me be mistaken; it was not for *Christ's* sake, but for *your sake*." One of our common acquaintance jocosely remarked, that, knowing it to be the custom of the saints, when they received any favor, to shift the burden of the obligation from off their own shoulders, and place it in heaven, I had contrived to fix it on earth.

The last time I saw Mr. Whitefield was in London, when he consulted me about his Orphan House concern, and his purpose of appropriating it to the establishment of a college.

He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his words so perfectly, that he might be heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditors observed the most perfect silence. He preached one evening from the top of the Court-house steps, which are in the middle of Market-street, and on the west side of Second-street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were filled with his hearers to a considerable distance. Being

among the hindmost in Market-street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backward down the street toward the river; and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front-street, when some noise in that street obscured it. Imagining then a semicircle, of which my distance should be the radius, and that it was filled with auditors, to each of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than thirty thousand. This reconciled me to the newspaper accounts of his having preached to twenty-five thousand people in the fields, and to the history of generals haranguing whole armies, of which I had sometimes doubted.

By hearing him often, I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed, and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turned and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music. This is an advantage itinerant preachers have over those who are stationary, as the latter can not well improve their delivery of a sermon by so many rehearsals.

His writing and printing from time to time gave great advantage to his enemies; unguarded expressions, and even erroneous opinions, delivered in

preaching, might have been afterward explained or qualified by supposing others that might have accompanied them, or they might have been denied; but *littera scripta manet*. Critics attacked his writings violently, and with so much appearance of reason as to diminish the number of his votaries and prevent their increase; so that I am satisfied that, if he had never written any thing, he would have left behind him a much more numerous and important sect, and his reputation might in that case have been still growing, even after his death, as, there being nothing of his writing on which to found a censure and give him a lower character, his proselytes would be left at liberty to attribute to him as great a variety of excellences as their enthusiastic admiration might wish him to have possessed.\*

\* The remarks which Franklin makes relative to the distance at which he heard Whitefield's voice may require a little explanation to those who are acquainted with the appearances of Market-street now. The Court-house, of which he speaks as then standing in High or Market street, has long since been removed, and a long line of market-houses occupies the center of the street. The following interesting particulars relative to the reception of Whitefield in this country are extracted from cotemporary files of the Pennsylvania Gazette, Franklin's newspaper.

November 15th, 1739.—“The Reverend Mr. Whitefield, having given me copies of his Journals and Sermons, with leave to print the same, I propose to publish them with all expedition, if I find sufficient encouragement. The Sermons will make two volumes, and the Journals two more, which will be delivered to subscribers at two shillings for each volume, bound. Those, therefore, who are inclined to encourage this work, are desired speedily to send in their names to me, that I may take measures accordingly.”

November 29th.—“On Friday last, Mr. Whitefield arrived here with his friends from New York, where he preached eight times. He has preached twice every day to great crowds, except Tuesday, when he preached at Germantown, from a balcony, to about five thousand people in the



My business was now constantly augmenting, and my circumstances growing daily easier, my newspaper having become very profitable, as being for a time almost the only one in this and the neighboring provinces. I experienced, too, the truth of the observation, "*that after getting the first hundred pounds, it is more easy to get the second,*" money itself being of a prolific nature.

The partnership at Carolina having succeeded, I

street. And last night the crowd was so great to hear his farewell sermon, that the church could not contain one half, whereupon they withdrew to Society Hill, where he preached from a balcony to a multitude computed at not less than ten thousand people. He left this city to-day."

*December 5th.*—"On Thursday last, the Reverend Mr. Whitefield left this city, and was accompanied to Chester by about one hundred and fifty horse, and preached there to about seven thousand people. On Friday he preached twice at Wilting's Town to about five thousand, on Saturday, at Newcastle, to about two thousand five hundred; and the same evening at Christiana Bridge, to about three thousand; on Sunday, at White Clay Creek, he preached twice, resting about half an hour between the sermons, to about eight thousand, of whom three thousand, it is computed, came on horseback. It rained most of the time, and yet they stood in the open air."

*May 15th, 1740.*—"This evening the Reverend Mr. Whitefield went on board his sloop at Newcastle to sail for Georgia. On Sunday he preached twice at Philadelphia. The last was his farewell sermon, at which was a vast audience. On Monday he preached at Derby and Chester; on Tuesday at Wilmington and White Clay Creek; on Wednesday at Nottingham; on Thursday at Fog's Manor. The congregations were, at every place, much more numerous than when he was here last. We hear that he has collected in these parts, in goods and money, between four and five hundred pounds sterling for his Orphan House in Georgia."

*May 22d, 1740.*—"Monday next will be delivered to the subscribers two volumes of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's works, viz., one of Sermons and one of Journals. The other volumes being nearly finished, will be ready in a short time. The whole number of names subscribed far exceeds the number of books printed. Those subscribers who have paid, or who bring the money in their hands, will have the preference."

was encouraged to engage in others, and to promote several of my workmen, who had behaved well, by establishing them in printing-houses in different colonies, on the same terms with that in Carolina. Most of them did well, being enabled at the end of our term, six years, to purchase the types of me and go on working for themselves, by which means several families were raised. Partnerships often finish in quarrels; but I was happy in this, that mine were all carried on and ended amicably, owing, I think, a good deal to the precaution of having very explicitly settled, in our articles, every thing to be done by or expected from each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute, which precaution I would therefore recommend to all who enter into partnerships; for, whatever esteem partners may have for, and confidence in, each other at the time of the contract, little jealousies and disgusts may arise, with ideas of inequality in the care and burden, business, &c., which are attended often with breach of friendship and of the connection, perhaps with lawsuits and other disagreeable consequences.

I had, on the whole, abundant reason to be satisfied with my being established in Pennsylvania. There were, however, some things that I regretted, there being no provision for defense, nor for a complete education of youth; no militia, nor any college. I therefore, in 1743, drew up a proposal for establishing an academy; and at that time, thinking the Reverend Richard Peters, who was out of employ, a fit person to superintend such an institution, I com-



municated the project to him ; but he, having more profitable views in the service of the proprietors, which succeeded, declined the undertaking ; and, not knowing another at that time suitable for such a trust, I let the scheme lie a while dormant. I succeeded better the next year, 1744, in proposing and establishing a *Philosophical Society*.\* The paper I wrote for that purpose will be found among my writings, if not lost with many others.

With respect to defense, Spain having been several years at war against Great Britain, and being at length joined by France, which brought us into great danger ; and the labored and long-continued endeavor of our governor, Thomas, to prevail with our Quaker Assembly to pass a militia law, and make other provisions for the security of the province, having proved abortive, I proposed to try what might be done by a voluntary subscription of the people. To promote this, I first wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled PLAIN TRUTH, in which I stated our helpless situation in strong lights, with the necessity of union and discipline for our defense, and promised to propose in a few days an association, to be generally signed for that purpose. The pamphlet had

\* This institution, one of the best and oldest in the country, now possesses a library of 14,000 volumes, and a fine collection of minerals, fossils, relics, &c., &c. Its "Transactions," published from time to time, are of great value, and its present condition is highly prosperous. It numbers among its active members men of the best practical and philosophical mind in the country, and its rooms, open to strangers on application to the librarian, have many visitors. In 1740 Franklin published a "General Magazine," better adapted to be useful than popular, which lasted only six months.



a sudden and surprising effect. I was called upon for the instrument of association. Having settled the draft of it with a few friends, I appointed a meeting of the citizens in the large building before mentioned. The house was pretty full; I had prepared a number of printed copies, and provided pens and ink dispersed all over the room. I harangued them a little on the subject, read the paper, explained it, and then distributed the copies, which were eagerly signed, not the least objection being made.

When the company separated, and the papers were collected, we found above twelve hundred signatures; and, other copies being dispersed in the country, the subscribers amounted at length to upward of ten thousand. These all furnished themselves as soon as they could with arms, formed themselves into companies and regiments, chose their own officers, and met every week to be instructed in the manual exercise, and other parts of military discipline. The women, by subscriptions among themselves, provided silk colors, which they presented to the companies, painted with different devices and mottoes, which I supplied.

The officers of the companies composing the Philadelphia regiment, being met, chose me for their colonel; but, conceiving myself unfit, I declined that station, and recommended Mr. Lawrence, a fine person, and a man of influence, who was accordingly appointed. I then proposed a lottery to defray the expense of building a battery below the town, and furnished with cannon. It filled expeditiously, and



the battery was soon erected, the merlons being framed of logs and filled with earth. We bought some old cannon from Boston ; but, these not being sufficient, we wrote to London for more, soliciting, at the same time, our proprietaries for some assistance, though without much expectation of obtaining it.

Meanwhile, Colonel Lawrence, Mr. Allen, Abraham Taylor, and myself were sent to New York by the associators, commissioned to borrow some cannon of Governor Clinton. He at first refused us peremptorily ; but at dinner with his council, where there was great drinking of Madeira wine, as the custom of that place then was, he softened by de

grees, and said he would lend us six. After a few more bumpers he advanced to ten; and at length he very good-naturedly conceded eighteen. They were fine cannon, eighteen-pounders, with their carriages, which were soon transported and mounted on our batteries, where the associators kept a nightly guard while the war lasted, and among the rest I regularly took my turn of duty there as a common soldier.



My activity in these operations was agreeable to the governor and council; they took me into confidence, and I was consulted by them in every measure where their concurrence was thought useful to the association. Calling in the aid of religion, I proposed to them the proclaiming a fast, to promote reformation, and implore the blessing of Heaven on our undertaking. They embraced the motion; but, as it was the first fast ever thought of in the province, the secretary had no preceden



from which to draw the proclamation. My education in New England, where a fast is proclaimed every year, was here of some advantage : I drew it in the accustomed style ; it was translated into German, printed in both languages, and circulated through the province. This gave the clergy of the different sects an opportunity of influencing their congregations to join the association, and it would probably have been general among all but the Quakers if the peace had not soon intervened.

It was thought by some of my friends that, by my activity in these affairs, I should offend that sect, and thereby lose my influence in the Assembly of the province, where they formed a great majority. A young man, who had likewise some friends in the Assembly, and wished to succeed me as their clerk, acquainted me that it was decided to displace me at the next election ; and he, through good will, advised me to resign, as more consistent with my honor than being turned out. My answer to him was, that I had read or heard of some public man who made it a rule never to ask for an office, and never to refuse one when offered to him. "I approve," said I, "of this rule, and shall practice it with a small addition : I shall never *ask*, never *refuse*, nor ever RESIGN an office. If they will have my office of clerk to dispose of it to another, they shall take it from me. I will not, by giving it up, lose my right of some time or other making reprisal on my adversaries." I heard, however, no more of this ; I was chosen again unanimously as clerk at

the next election. Possibly, as they disliked my late intimacy with the members of council, who had joined the governors in all the disputes about military preparations, with which the House had long been harassed, they might have been pleased if I would voluntarily have left them; but they did not care to displace me on account merely of my zeal for the association, and they could not well give another reason.

Indeed, I had some reason to believe that the defense of the country was not disagreeable to any of them, provided they were not required to assist in it. And I found that a much greater number of them than I could have imagined, though against *offensive* war, were clearly for the *defensive*. Many pamphlets *pro* and *con* were published on the subject, and some by good Quakers, in favor of *defense*, which I believe convinced most of their young people.

A transaction in our fire company gave me some insight into their prevailing sentiments. It had been proposed that we should encourage the scheme for building a battery by laying out the present stock, then about sixty pounds, in tickets of the lottery. By our rules, no money could be disposed of till the next meeting after the proposal. The company consisted of thirty members, of whom twenty-two were Quakers, and eight only of other persuasions. We eight punctually attended the meeting; but, though we thought that some of the Quakers would join us, we were by no means sure of a majority. Only

one Quaker, Mr. James Morris, appeared to oppose the measure. He expressed much sorrow that it had ever been proposed, as he said *Friends* were all against it, and it would create such discord as might break up the company. We told him that we saw no reason for that; we were the minority, and if *Friends* were against the measure, and out-voted us, we must and should, agreeably to the usage of all societies, submit. When the hour for business arrived, it was moved to put this to the vote; he allowed we might do it by the rules, but, as he could assure us that a number of members intended to be present for the purpose of opposing it, it would be but candid to allow a little time for their appearing.

While we were disputing this, a waiter came to tell me that two gentlemen below desired to speak with me. I went down, and found there two of our Quaker members. They told me there were eight of them assembled at a tavern just by; that they were determined to come and vote with us if there should be occasion, which they hoped would not be the case, and desired we would not call for their assistance if we could do without it, as their voting for such a measure might embroil them with their elders and friends. Being thus secure of a majority, I went up, and after a little seeming hesitation, agreed to a delay of another hour. This Mr. Morris allowed to be extremely fair. Not one of his opposing friends appeared, at which he expressed great surprise; and, at the expiration of the hour, we carried the resolution eight to one; and as, of



the twenty-two Quakers, eight were ready to vote with us, and thirteen, by their absence, manifested that they were not inclined to oppose the measure, I afterward estimated the proportion of Quakers sincerely against defense as one to twenty-one only; for these were all regular members of the society, and in good reputation among them, and who had notice of what was proposed at that meeting.

The honorable and learned Mr. Logan, who had always been of that sect, wrote an address to them, declaring his approbation of *defensive* war, and supported his opinion by many strong arguments. He put into my hands sixty pounds to be laid out in lottery tickets for the battery, with directions to apply what prizes might be drawn wholly to that service. He told me the following anecdote of his old master, William Penn, respecting defense. He came over from England, when a young man, with that proprietary, and as his secretary. It was war-time, and their ship was chased by an armed vessel, supposed to be an enemy. Their captain prepared for defense; but told William Penn, and his company of Quakers, that he did not expect their assistance, and they might retire into the cabin, which they did, except James Logan, who chose to stay upon deck, and was quartered to a gun. The supposed enemy proved a friend, so there was no fighting; but when the secretary went down to communicate the intelligence, William Penn rebuked him severely for staying upon deck, and undertaking to assist in defending the vessel, contrary to the prin-

ciples of Friends, especially as it had not been required by the captain. This reprimand, being before all the company, piqued the secretary, who answered, "I being thy servant, why did thee not order me to come down? But thee was willing enough that I should stay and help to fight the ship when thee thought there was danger."

My being many years in the Assembly, a majority of which were constantly Quakers, gave me frequent opportunities of seeing the embarrassment given them by their principle against war, whenever application was made to them, by order of the crown, to grant aids for military purposes. They were unwilling to offend government, on the one hand, by a direct refusal; and their friends, the body of the Quakers, on the other, by a compliance contrary to their principles; using a variety of evasions to avoid complying, and modes of disguising the compliance when it became unavoidable. The common mode at last was, to grant money under the phrase of its being "*for the king's use*," and never to inquire how it was applied.

But, if the demand was not directly from the crown, that phrase was found not so proper, and some other was to be invented. Thus, when powder was wanting (I think it was for the garrison at Louisburg), and the government of New England solicited a grant of some from Pennsylvania, which was much urged on the House by Governor Thomas, they would not grant money to buy *powder*, because that was an ingredient of war; but they voted an

aid to New England of three thousand pounds, to be put into the hands of the governor, and appropriated it for the purchase of bread, flour, wheat, or *other grain*. Some of the council, desirous of giving the House still further embarrassment, advised the governor not to accept provision, as not being the thing he had demanded; but he replied, "I shall take the money, for I understand very well their meaning; *other grain* is gunpowder," which he accordingly bought, and they never objected to it.

It was in allusion to this fact that, when in our fire company we feared the success of our proposal in favor of the lottery, and I had said to a friend of mine, one of our members, "If we fail, let us move the purchase of a fire-engine with the money; the Quakers can have no objection to that; and then, if you nominate me and I you as a committee for that purpose, we will buy a great gun, which is certainly a *fire-engine*." "I see," said he, "you have





improved by being so long in the Assembly; your equivocal project would be just a match for their wheat or *other grain*."

Those embarrassments that the Quakers suffered from having established and published it as one of their principles that no kind of war was lawful, and which, being once published, they could not afterward, however they might change their minds, easily get rid of, reminds me of what I think a more prudent conduct in another sect among us, that of the Dunkers. I was acquainted with one of its founders, Michael Weffare, soon after it appeared. He complained to me that they were grievously calumniated by the zealots of other persuasions, and charged with abominable principles and practices, to which they were utter strangers. I told him this had always been the case with new sects, and that, to put a stop to such abuse, I imagined it might be well to publish the articles of their belief, and the rules of their discipline. He said that it had been proposed among them, but not agreed to, for this reason: "When we were first drawn together as a society," said he, "it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines, which were esteemed truths, were errors; and that others, which we had esteemed errors, were real truths. From time to time He has been pleased to afford us further light, and our principles have been improving, and our errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we are arrived at the end of this progression, and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and

we fear that, if we should once print our confession of faith, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement, and our successors still more so, as conceiving what their elders and founders had done to be something sacred, never to be departed from."

This modesty in a sect is perhaps a singular instance in the history of mankind, every other sect supposing itself in possession of all truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong; like a man traveling in foggy weather, those at some distance before him on the road he sees wrapped up in the fog, as well as those behind him, and also the people in the fields on each side, but near him all appear clear, though in truth he is as much in the fog as any of them. To avoid this kind of embarrassment, the Quakers have of late years been gradually declining the public service in the Assembly and in the magistracy, choosing rather to quit their power than their principle.

In order of time, I should have mentioned before, that having, in 1742, invented an open stove for the better warming of rooms, and at the same time saving fuel, as the fresh air admitted was warmed in entering, I made a present of the model to Mr. Robert Grace, one of my early friends, who, having an iron-furnace, found the casting of the plates for these stoves a profitable thing, as they were growing in demand. To promote that demand, I wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled "An Account of the

new-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces; wherein their Construction and Manner of Operation are particularly explained; their Advantages above every other Method of warming Rooms demonstrated; and all Objections that have been raised against the Use of them answered and obviated," &c. This pamphlet had a good effect. Governor Thomas was so pleased with the construction of this stove, as described in it, that he offered to give me a patent for the sole vending of them for a term of years; but I declined it from a principle which has ever weighed with me on such occasions, viz., *That, as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.*

An ironmonger in London, however, assuming a good deal of my pamphlet, and working it up into his own, and making some small changes in the machine, which rather hurt its operation, got a patent for it there, and made, as I was told, a little fortune by it. And this is not the only instance of patents taken out of my inventions by others, though not always with the same success, which I never contested, as having no desire of profiting by patents myself, and hating disputes. The use of these fireplaces in very many houses, both here in Pennsylvania and the neighboring states, has been, and is, a great saving of wood to the inhabitants.



## CHAPTER IX.

PEACE being concluded, and the association business therefore at an end, I turned my thoughts again to the affair of establishing an academy. The first step I took was to associate in the design a number of active friends, of whom the Junto furnished a good part; the next was to write and publish a pamphlet, entitled *Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*. This I distributed among the principal inhabitants gratis; and as soon as I could suppose their minds a little prepared by the perusal of it, I set on foot a subscription for opening and supporting an academy: it was to be paid in quotas yearly for five years; by so dividing it, I judged the subscription might be larger, and I believe it was so, amounting to no less, if I remember right, than five thousand pounds.

In the introduction to these proposals, I stated their publication, not as an act of mine, but of some *public-spirited gentlemen*, avoiding as much as I could, according to my usual rule, the presenting myself to the public as the author of any scheme for their benefit.

The subscribers, to carry the project into immediate execution, chose out of their number twenty-four trustees, and appointed Mr. Francis, then at-

torney-general, and myself to draw up constitutions for the government of the academy ; which being done and signed, a house was hired, masters engaged, and the schools opened, I think, in the same year, 1749.

The scholars increasing fast, the house was soon found too small, and we were looking out for a piece of ground, properly situated, with intent to build, when accident threw in our way a large house ready built, which, with a few alterations, might well serve our purpose. This was the building before mentioned, erected by the hearers of Mr. Whitefield, and was obtained for us in the following manner.

It is to be noted that the contributions to this building being made by people of different sects, care was taken in the nomination of trustees, in whom the building and ground were to be vested, that a predominance should not be given to any sect, lest in time that predominance might be a means of appropriating the whole to the use of such sect, contrary to the original intention. It was for this reason that one of each sect was appointed, viz., one Church-of-England man, one Presbyterian, one Baptist, one Moravian, &c., who, in case of vacancy by death, were to fill it by election from among the contributors. The Moravian happened not to please his colleagues, and on his death they resolved to have no other of that sect. The difficulty then was, how to avoid having two of some other sect, by means of the new choice.

Several persons were named, and for that reason

not agreed to. At length one mentioned me, with the observation that I was merely an honest man, and of *no sect* at all, which prevailed with them to choose me. The enthusiasm which existed when the house was built had long since abated, and its trustees had not been able to procure fresh contributions for paying the ground-rent, and discharging some other debts the building had occasioned, which embarrassed them greatly. Being now a member of both boards of trustees, that for the building and that for the academy, I had a good opportunity of negotiating with both, and brought them finally to an agreement, by which the trustees for the building were to cede it to those of the academy, the latter undertaking to discharge the debt, to keep forever open in the building a large hall for occasional preachers, according to the original intention, and maintain a free-school for the instruction of poor children. Writings were accordingly drawn, and on paying the debts the trustees of the academy were put in possession of the premises; and by dividing the great and lofty hall into stories, and different rooms above and below for the several schools, and purchasing some additional ground, the whole was soon made fit for our purpose, and the scholars removed into the building. The whole care and trouble of agreeing with the workmen, purchasing materials, and superintending the work, fell upon me; and I went through it the more cheerfully, as it did not then interfere with my private business, having the year before taken a very able, industrious, and



honest partner, Mr. David Hall, with whose character I was well acquainted, as he had worked for me four years. He took off my hands all care of the printing-office, paying me punctually my share of the profits. This partnership continued eighteen years, successfully for us both.

The trustees of the academy, after a while, were incorporated by a charter from the governor; their funds were increased by contributions in Britain and grants of land from the proprietaries, to which the Assembly has since made considerable addition; and thus was established the present University of Philadelphia. I have been continued one of its trustees from the beginning, now near forty years, and have had the very great pleasure of seeing a number of the youth who have received their education in it, distinguished by their improved abilities, serviceable in public stations, and ornaments to their country.\*

When I was disengaged myself, as above mentioned, from private business, I flattered myself that, by the sufficient though moderate fortune I had acquired, I had found leisure during the rest of my life for philosophical studies and amusements. I pur-

\* The old "Academy," as the building of which Franklin speaks above was called, remained standing in Fourth-street, above Market, until 1844. Whatever advantages its internal arrangements may have presented, its exterior was unsightly. It was crowded and hemmed in by other structures. A new and tasteful edifice, with modern improvements and conveniences, has now taken its place. For many years the building had been occupied as an academy, preparatory to the University, commodious buildings for which were erected in North-street, near Chestnut.

chased all Dr. Spence's apparatus, who had come from England to lecture in Philadelphia, and I proceeded in my electrical experiments with great alacrity; but the public, now considering me as a man of leisure, laid hold of me for their purposes, every part of our civil government, and almost at the same time, imposing some duty upon me. The governor put me into the commission of the peace; the corporation of the city chose me one of the common council, and soon after alderman; and the citizens at large elected me a burgess to represent them in the Assembly. This latter station was the more agreeable to me, as I grew at length tired with sitting there to hear the debates, in which, as clerk, I could take no part, and which were often so uninteresting that I was induced to amuse myself with making magic squares or circles, or any thing to avoid weariness; and I conceived my becoming a member would enlarge my power of doing good. I would not, however, insinuate that my ambition was not flattered by all these promotions; it certainly was; for, considering my low beginning, they were great things to me; and they were still more pleasing, as being so many spontaneous testimonies of the public good opinion, and by me entirely unsolicited.

The office of justice of the peace I tried a little, by attending a few courts, and sitting on the bench to hear causes; but finding that more knowledge of the common law than I possessed was necessary to act in that station with credit, I gradually withdrew from it, excusing myself by being obliged to attend

the higher duties of a legislator in the Assembly. My election to this trust was repeated every year for ten years, without my ever asking any elector for his vote, or signifying, either directly or indirectly, any desire of being chosen. On taking my seat in the House, my son was appointed their clerk.

The year following, a treaty being to be held with the Indians at Carlisle, the governor sent a message to the House, proposing that they should nominate some of their members, to be joined with some members of council, as commissioners for that purpose. The House named the speaker (Mr. Norris) and myself; and, being commissioned, we went to Carlisle, and met the Indians accordingly.

As those people are extremely apt to get drunk, and, when so, are very quarrelsome and disorderly, we strictly forbade the selling any liquor to them; and when they complained of this restriction, we told them that if they would continue sober during the treaty, we would give them plenty of rum when the business was over. They promised this, and they kept their promise, because they could get no rum, and the treaty was conducted very orderly, and concluded to mutual satisfaction. They then claimed and received the rum; this was in the afternoon: they were near one hundred men, women, and children, and were lodged in temporary cabins, built in the form of a square, just without the town. In the evening, hearing a great noise among them, the commissioners walked to see what was the matter. We found they had made a great bonfire in the



middle of the square; they were all drunk, men and women, quarreling and fighting. Their dark-col-



ored bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, running after and beating one another with firebrands, accompanied by their horrid yellings, formed a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell that could well be imagined; there was no appeasing the tumult, and we retired to our lodging. At midnight a number of them came thundering at our door, demanding more rum, of which we took no notice.

The next day, sensible they had misbehaved in giving us that disturbance, they sent three of their old counselors to make their apology. The orator acknowledged the fault, but laid it upon the rum; and then endeavored to excuse the rum by saying, "The Great Spirit, who made all things, made every

thing for some use, and whatever use he designed any thing for, that use it should always be put to. Now, when he made rum, he said, ‘*Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with,*’ and it must be so.” And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not impossible that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the sea-coast.

In 1751, Dr. Thomas Bond, a particular friend of mine, conceived the idea of establishing a hospital in Philadelphia (a very beneficent design, which has been ascribed to me, but was originally and truly his), for the reception and cure of poor sick persons, whether inhabitants of the province or strangers. He was zealous and active in endeavoring to procure subscriptions for it, but the proposal being a novelty in America, and at first not well understood, he met but with little success.

At length he came to me with the compliment that he found there was no such thing as carrying a public-spirited project through without my being concerned in it. “For,” said he, “I am often asked by those to whom I propose subscribing, *Have you consulted Franklin on this business? And what does he think of it?* And when I tell them that I have not, supposing it rather out of your line, they do not subscribe, but say *they will consider it.*” I inquired into the nature and probable utility of this scheme, and receiving from him a very satisfactory explana-

tion, I not only subscribed to it myself, but engaged heartily in the design of procuring subscriptions from others. Previously, however, to the solicitation, I endeavored to prepare the minds of the people by writing on the subject in the newspapers, which was my usual custom in such cases, but which Dr. Bond had omitted.

The subscriptions afterward were more free and generous ; but, beginning to flag, I saw they would be insufficient without some assistance from the Assembly, and therefore proposed to petition for it, which was done. The country members did not at first relish the project ; they objected that it could only be serviceable to the city, and therefore the citizens alone should be at the expense of it ; and they doubted whether the citizens themselves generally approved of it. My allegation on the contrary, that it met with such approbation as to leave no doubt of our being able to raise two thousand pounds by voluntary donations, they considered as a most extravagant supposition, and utterly impossible.

On this I formed my plan ; and, asking leave to bring in a bill for incorporating the contributors according to the prayer of their petition, and granting them a blank sum of money, which leave was obtained chiefly on the consideration that the House could throw the bill out if they did not like it, I drew it so as to make the important clause a conditional one, viz., “ And be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that when the said contributors shall have



met and chosen their managers and treasurer, and shall have raised by their contributions a capital stock of two thousand pounds' value (the yearly interest of which is to be applied to the accommodation of the sick poor in the said hospital, and of charge for diet, attendance, advice, and medicines), and *shall make the same appear to the satisfaction of the speaker of the Assembly for the time being*, that then it shall and may be lawful for the said speaker, and he is hereby required, to sign an order on the provincial treasurer for the payment of two thousand pounds, in two yearly payments, to the treasurer of the said hospital, to be applied to the founding, building, and finishing of the same."

This condition carried the bill through ; for the members, who had opposed the grant, and now conceived they might have the credit of being charitable without the expense, agreed to its passage ; and then, in soliciting subscriptions among the people, we urged the conditional promise of the law as an additional motive to give, since every man's donation would be doubled ; thus the clause worked both ways. The subscriptions accordingly soon exceeded the requisite sum, and we claimed and received the public gift, which enabled us to carry the design into execution. A convenient and handsome building was soon erected ; the institution has by constant experience been found useful, and flourishes to this day ; and I do not remember any of my political manœuvres, the success of which at the time gave me more pleasure, or wherein, after thinking of it, I

more easily excused myself for having made some use of cunning.\*

It was about this time that another projector, the Reverend Gilbert Tennent, came to me with a request that I would assist him in procuring a subscription for erecting a new meeting-house. It was to be for the use of a congregation he had gathered among the Presbyterians, who were originally disciples of Mr. Whitefield. Unwilling to make myself disagreeable to my fellow-citizens by too frequently soliciting their contributions, I absolutely refused. He then desired I would furnish him with a list of the names of persons I knew by experience to be generous and public-spirited. I thought it would be unbecoming in me, after their kind compliance with my solicitations, to mark them out to be worried by other beggars, and therefore refused to give such a list. He then desired I would at least give him my advice. "That I will readily do," said I; "and, in the first place, I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something; next, to those who you are uncertain whether they will give any thing or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and, lastly, do not neglect those who you are

\* The building occupied by the Pennsylvania Hospital, situated in Pine-street, between Eighth and Ninth, was completed in 1804, and occupies a whole square. It is one of the best-endowed institutions in the country, and one of the most useful, having now an excellent insane department connected with it, a valuable library, lecture-room, anatomical museum, &c. The institution is supported by the interest of its fund, the receipts from the exhibition of West's painting, and the board of pay-patients. It is a great testimony to the sagacity and philanthropy of Franklin that such successful institutions rest on his foundations

sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken." He laughed and thanked me, and said he would take my advice. He did so, for he asked of *everybody*, and he obtained a much larger sum than he expected, with which he erected the capacious and elegant meeting-house that stands in Arch-street.

Our city, though laid out with a beautiful regularity, the streets large, straight, and crossing each other at right angles, had the disgrace of suffering those streets to remain long unpaved, and in wet weather the wheels of heavy carriages ploughed them into a quagmire, so that it was difficult to cross them; and in dry weather the dust was offensive. I had lived near what was called the Jersey Market, and saw with pain the inhabitants wading in mud while purchasing their provisions. A strip of ground down the middle of that market was at length paved with brick, so that, being once in the market, they had firm footing, but were often over shoes in dirt to get there. By talking and writing on the subject, I was at length instrumental in getting the street paved with stone between the market and the brick foot-pavement, that was on the side next the houses. This, for some time, gave an easy access to the market dry-shod; but, the rest of the street not being paved, whenever a carriage came out of the mud upon this pavement, it shook off and left its dirt upon it, and it was soon covered with mire, which was not removed, the city as yet having no scavengers.

After some inquiry, I found a poor, industrious



man, who was willing to undertake keeping the pavement clean, by sweeping it twice a week, carrying off the dirt from before all the neighbors' doors, for the sum of sixpence per month, to be paid by each house. I then wrote and printed a paper setting forth the advantages to the neighborhood that might be obtained from this small expense; the greater ease in keeping our houses clean, so much dirt not being brought in by people's feet; the benefit to the shops by more custom, as buyers could more easily get at them; and by not having, in windy weather, the dust blown in upon their goods, &c., &c. I sent one of these papers to each house, and in a day or two went round to see who would subscribe an agreement to pay these sixpences; it was unanimously signed, and for a time well executed. All the inhabitants of the city were delighted with the cleanliness of the pavement that surrounded the market, it being a convenience to all, and this raised a general desire to have all the streets paved, and made the people more willing to submit to a tax for that purpose.

After some time I drew a bill for paving the city, and brought it into the Assembly. It was just before I went to England, in 1757, and did not pass till I was gone, and then with an alteration in the mode of assessment, which I thought not for the better, but with an additional provision for lighting as well as paving the streets, which was a great improvement. It was by a private person, the late Mr. John Clifton, giving a sample of the utility of lamps,

by placing one at his door, that the people were first impressed with the idea of lighting all the city. The honor of this public benefit has also been ascribed to me, but it belongs truly to that gentleman. I did but follow his example, and have only some merit to claim respecting the form of our lamps, as differing from the globe lamps we were at first supplied with from London. They were found inconvenient in these respects: they admitted no air below; the smoke, therefore, did not readily go out above, but circulated in the globe, lodged on its inside, and soon obstructed the light they were intended to afford; giving, besides, the daily trouble of wiping them clean; and an accidental stroke on one of them would demolish it, and render it totally useless. I therefore suggested the composing them of four flat panes, with a long funnel above to draw up the smoke, and crevices admitting the air below, to facilitate the ascent of the smoke; by this means they were kept clean, and did not grow dark in a few hours, as the London lamps do, but continued bright till morning, and an accidental stroke would generally break but a single pane, easily repaired.

I have sometimes wondered that the Londoners did not, from the effect holes in the bottom of the globe lamps used at Vauxhall have in keeping them clean, learn to have such holes in their street lamps. But, these holes being made for another purpose, viz., to communicate flame more suddenly to the wick by a little flax hanging down through them, the other use, of letting in air, seems not to have been

thought of; and therefore, after the lamps have been lit a few hours, the streets of London are very poorly illuminated.

The mention of these improvements puts me in mind of one I proposed, when in London, to Dr. Fothergill, who was among the best men I have known, and a great promoter of useful projects. I had observed that the streets, when dry, were never swept, and the light dust carried away; but it was suffered to accumulate till wet weather reduced it to mud, and then, after lying some days so deep on the pavement that there was no crossing but in paths kept clean by poor people with brooms, it was with great labor raked together and thrown up into carts, open above, the sides of which suffered some of the slush at every jolt on the pavement to shake out and fall, sometimes to the annoyance of foot-passengers. The reason given for not sweeping the dusty streets was, that the dust would fly into the windows of shops and houses.

An accidental occurrence had instructed me how much sweeping might be done in a little time. I found at my door in Craven-street, one morning, a poor woman sweeping my pavement with a birch broom; she appeared very pale and feeble, as just come out of a fit of sickness. I asked who employed her to sweep there; she said, "Nobody; but I am poor and in distress, and I sweeps before gentle-folkses doors, and hopes they will give me something." I bid her sweep the whole street clean, and I would give her a shilling; this was at nine o'clock;

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at noon she came for the shilling From the slowness I saw at first in her working, I could scarce believe that the work was done so soon, and sent my servant to examine it, who reported that the whole street was swept perfectly clean, and all the dust placed in the gutter, which was in the middle; and the next rain washed it quite away, so that the pavement and even the kennel were perfectly clean.

I then judged that, if that feeble woman could sweep such a street in three hours, a strong, active man might have done it in half the time. And here let me remark the convenience of having but one gutter in such a narrow street, running down its middle, instead of two, one on each side, near the footway; for where all the rain that falls on a street

runs from the sides and meets in the middle, it forms there a current strong enough to wash away all the mud it meets with ; but when divided into two channels, it is often too weak to cleanse either, and only makes the mud it finds more fluid, so that the wheels of carriages and feet of horses throw and dash it upon the foot-pavement, which is thereby rendered foul and slippery, and sometimes splash it upon those who are walking. My proposal, communicated to the doctor, was as follows :

“For the more effectually cleaning and keeping clean the streets of London and Westminster, it is proposed that the several watchmen be contracted with to have the dust swept up in dry seasons, and the mud raked up at other times, each in the several streets and lanes of his round ; that they be furnished with brooms and other proper instruments for these purposes, to be kept at their respective stands, ready to furnish the poor people they may employ in the service.

“That in the dry summer months the dust be all swept up into heaps at proper distances, before the shops and windows of houses are usually opened, when scavengers, with close covered carts, shall also carry it all away.

“That the mud, when raked up, be not left in heaps to be spread abroad again by the wheels of carriages and trampling of horses, but that the scavengers be provided with bodies of carts, not placed high upon wheels, but low upon sliders, with lattice bottoms, which, being covered with straw, will re-

tain the mud thrown into them, and permit the water to drain from it, whereby it will become much lighter, water making the greatest part of the weight; these bodies of carts to be placed at convenient distances, and the mud brought to them in wheelbarrows; they remaining where placed till the mud is drained, and then horses brought to draw them away."

I have since had doubts of the practicability of the latter part of this proposal, in all places, on account of the narrowness of some streets, and the difficulty of placing the draining-sleds so as not to encumber too much the passage; but I am still of opinion that the former, requiring the dust to be swept up and carried away before the shops are open, is very practicable in the summer, when the days are long; for, in walking through the Strand and Fleet-street one morning at seven o'clock, I observed there was not one shop open, though it had been daylight and the sun up above three hours; the inhabitants of London choosing voluntarily to live much by candle-light, and sleep by sunshine, and yet often complain, a little absurdly, of the duty on candles, and the high price of tallow.

Some may think these trifling matters not worth minding or relating; but when they consider that though dust blown into the eyes of a single person, or into a single shop in a windy day, is but of small importance, yet the great number of the instances in a populous city, and its frequent repetition, gives it weight and consequence, perhaps they will not cen-



sure very severely those who bestow some attention to affairs of this seemingly low nature. Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day. Thus, if you teach a poor young man to shave himself, and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to the happiness of his life than in giving him a thousand guineas. This sum may be soon spent, the regret only remaining of having foolishly consumed it; but in the other case, he escapes the frequent vexation of waiting for barbers, and of their sometimes dirty fingers, offensive breaths, and dull razors; he shaves when most convenient to him, and enjoys daily the pleasure of its being done with a good instrument. With these sentiments I have hazarded the few preceding pages, hoping they may afford hints which some time or other may be useful to a city I love, having lived many years in it very happily, and perhaps to some of our towns in America.

Having been some time employed by the postmaster-general of America as his comptroller in regulating several offices, and bringing the officers to account, I was, upon his death in 1753, appointed, jointly with Mr. William Hunter, to succeed him, by a commission from the postmaster-general in England. The American office had hitherto never paid any thing to that of Britain. We were to have six hundred pounds a year between us, if we could make that sum out of the profits of the office. To do this, a variety of improvements was necessary; some of

these were inevitably at first expensive, so that in the first four years the office became above nine hundred pounds in debt to us. But it soon after began to repay us; and before I was displaced by a freak of the ministers, of which I shall speak hereafter, we had brought it to yield *three times* as much clear revenue to the crown as the postoffice of Ireland. Since that imprudent transaction, they have received from it—not one farthing!

The business of the postoffice occasioned my taking a journey this year to New England,\* where the College of Cambridge, of their own motion, presented me with the degree of Master of Arts. Yale College, in Connecticut, had before made me a similar compliment. Thus, without studying in any college, I came to partake of their honors. They were conferred in consideration of my improvements and discoveries in the electric branch of natural philosophy.

\* In a letter written from Passy, France, May, 1784, to Dr. Mather, Boston, Franklin thus speaks of his visits to Boston: "I long much to see again my native place, and to lay my bones there. I left it in 1723; I visited it in 1733, 1743, 1753, and 1763. In 1773 I was in England; in 1775 I had a sight of it, but could not enter, it being then in possession of the enemy. I did hope to have been there in 1783, but could not obtain my dismission from this employment here; and now I fear I shall never have that happiness." The doctor's visit in 1775 was as a member of a Congressional committee to the camp at Cambridge. His fears (in 1784) that he should never again see Boston were prophetic.

## CHAPTER X.

IN 1754, war with France being again apprehended, a congress of commissioners from the different colonies was, by the order of the Lords of Trade, to be assembled at Albany, there to confer with the chiefs of the Six Nations concerning the means of defending both their country and ours. Governor Hamilton, having received this order, acquainted the House with it, requesting they would furnish proper presents for the Indians, to be given on this occasion ; and naming the speaker (Mr. Norris) and myself to join Mr. John Penn and Mr. Secretary Peters as commissioners to act for Pennsylvania. The House approved the nomination, and provided the goods for the presents, though they did not much like treating out of the province ; and we met the other commissioners at Albany about the middle of June.

In our way thither, I projected and drew a plan for the union of all the colonies under one government, so far as might be necessary for defense, and other important general purposes. As we passed through New York, I had there shown my project to Mr. James Alexander and Mr. Kennedy, two gentlemen of great knowledge in public affairs, and, being fortified by their approbation, I ventured to



lay it before the Congress. It then appeared that several of the commissioners had formed plans of the same kind. A previous question was first taken, whether a union should be established, which passed in the affirmative unanimously. A committee was then appointed, one member from each colony, to consider the several plans and report. Mine happened to be preferred, and, with a few amendments, was accordingly reported.

By this plan the general government was to be administered by a president-general, appointed and supported by the crown, and a grand council was to be chosen by the representatives of the people of the several colonies, met in their respective assemblies. The debates upon it in Congress went on daily, hand in hand with the Indian business. Many objections and difficulties were started, but at length they were all overcome, and the plan was unanimously agreed to, and copies ordered to be transmitted to the Board of Trade and to the assemblies of the several provinces. Its fate was singular: the assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much *prerogative* in it, and in England it was judged to have too much of the *democratic*. The Board of Trade did not approve it, nor recommend it for the approbation of his majesty; but another scheme was formed, supposed to answer the same purpose better, whereby the governors of the provinces, with some members of their respective councils, were to meet and order the raising of troops, building of forts, &c., and to draw

on the treasury of Great Britain for the expense, which was afterward to be refunded by an act of Parliament laying a tax on America. My plan, with my reasons in support of it, is to be found among my political papers that were printed.

Being the winter following in Boston, I had much conversation with Governor Shirley upon both the plans. Part of what passed between us on this occasion may also be seen among those papers. The different and contrary reasons of dislike to my plan makes me suspect that it was really the true medium; and I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides if it had been adopted. The colonies, so united, would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; of course, the subsequent pretext for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided. But such mistakes are not new: history is full of the errors of states and princes.

“Look round the habitable world, how few  
Know their own good, or, knowing it, pursue!”

Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion.

The Governor of Pennsylvania, in sending it down to the Assembly, expressed his approbation of the plan, “as appearing to him to be drawn up with

great clearness and strength of judgment, and therefore recommended it as well worthy of their closest and most serious attention." The House, however, by the management of a certain member, took it up when I happened to be absent, which I thought not very fair, and reprobated it without paying any attention to it at all, to my no small mortification.

In my journey to Boston this year,\* I met at New York with our new governor, Mr. Morris, just arrived there from England, with whom I had been before intimately acquainted. He brought a commission to supersede Mr. Hamilton, who, tired with the disputes his proprietary instructions subjected him to, had resigned. Mr. Morris asked me if I thought he must expect as uncomfortable an administration. I said, "No; you may, on the contrary, have a very comfortable one, if you will only take care not to enter into any dispute with the Assembly." "My dear friend," said he, pleasantly, "how can you advise my avoiding disputes? You know I love disputing; it is one of my greatest pleasures; however, to show the regard I have for your counsel, I promise you I will, if possible, avoid them." He had some reason for loving to dispute, being eloquent, an acute sophister, and, therefore, generally successful in argumentative conversation. He had been brought up to it from a boy, his father, as I

\* In the letter quoted in a note to the last chapter, this visit to Boston is dated 1783. Such little inaccuracies, however, were to be expected in a man who had long passed threescore and ten. There are also some errors in the account of Braddock's defeat, in this chapter, which may be placed to the same cause.



have heard, accustoming his children to dispute with one another for his diversion, while sitting at table after dinner ; but I think the practice was not wise ; for, in the course of my observation, those disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs. They get victory sometimes, but they never get good will, which would be of more use to them. We parted, he going to Philadelphia, and I to Boston.

In returning, I met at New York with the votes of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, by which it appeared that, notwithstanding his promise to me, he and the House were already in high contention ; and it was a continual battle between them as long as he retained the government. I had my share of it ; for, as soon as I got back to my seat in the Assembly, I was put on every committee for answering his speeches and messages, and by the committees always desired to make the drafts. Our answers, as well as his messages, were often tart, and sometimes indecently abusive ; and, as he knew I wrote for the Assembly, one might have imagined that, when we met, we could hardly avoid cutting throats ; but he was so good-natured a man that no personal difference between him and me was occasioned by the contest, and we often dined together.

One afternoon, in the height of this public quarrel, we met in the street. " Franklin," said he, " you must go home with me and spend the evening ; I am to have some company that you will

like;" and, taking me by the arm, led me to his house. In gay conversation over our wine, after supper, he told us, jokingly, that he much admired the idea of Sancho Panza, who, when it was proposed to give him a government, requested it might be a government of blacks, as then, if he could not agree with his people, he might sell them. One of his friends, who sat next to me, said, "Franklin, why do you continue to side with those — Quakers? Had you not better sell them? The proprietor would give you a good price." "The governor," said I, "has not yet *blackened* them enough." He, indeed, had labored hard to blacken the Assembly in all his messages, but they wiped off his coloring as fast as he laid it on, and placed it, in return, thick upon his own face; so that, finding he was likely to be *negroified* himself, he, as well as Mr. Hamilton, grew tired of the contest, and quitted the government.

These public quarrels were all at bottom owing to the proprietaries, our hereditary governors, who, when any expense was to be incurred for the defense of their province, with incredible meanness instructed their deputies to pass no act for levying the necessary taxes, unless their vast estates were in the same act expressly exonerated; and they had even taken the bonds of these deputies to observe such instructions. The assemblies for three years held out against this injustice, though constrained to bend at last. At length Captain Denny, who was Governor Morris's successor, ventured to disobey

those instructions: how that was brought about I shall show hereafter.

But I am got forward too fast with my story: there are still some transactions to be mentioned that happened during the administration of Governor Morris.

War being in a manner commenced with France, the government of Massachusetts Bay projected an attack upon Crown Point, and sent Mr. Quincy to Pennsylvania, and Mr. Pownall, afterward Governor Pownall, to New York, to solicit assistance. As I was in the Assembly, knew its temper, and was Mr. Quincy's countryman, he applied to me for my influence and assistance. I dictated his address to them, which was well received. They voted an aid of ten thousand pounds, to be laid out in provisions. But the governor refusing his assent to their bill (which included this with other sums granted for the use of the crown), unless a clause were inserted exempting the proprietary estate from bearing any part of the tax that would be necessary, the Assembly, though very desirous of making their grant to New England effectual, were at a loss how to accomplish it. Mr. Quincy labored hard with the governor to obtain his assent, but he was obstinate.

I then suggested a method of doing the business without the governor, by orders on the trustees of the Loan Office, which, by law, the Assembly had the right of drawing. There was, indeed, little or no money at the time in the office, and therefore I proposed that the orders should be payable in a



year, and to bear an interest of five per cent. With these orders I supposed the provisions might easily be purchased. The Assembly, with very little hesitation, adopted the proposal. The orders were immediately printed, and I was one of the committee directed to sign and dispose of them. The fund for paying them was the interest of all the paper currency then extant in the province upon loan, together with the revenue arising from the excise, which being known to be more than sufficient, they obtained credit, and were not only taken in payment for the provisions, but many moneyed people, who had cash lying by them, vested it in those orders, which they found advantageous, as they bore interest while upon hand, and might on any occasion be used as money; so that they were all eagerly bought up, and in a few weeks none of them was to be seen. Thus this important affair was by my means completed. Mr. Quincy returned thanks to the Assembly in a handsome memorial, went home highly pleased with the success of his embassy, and ever after bore for me the most cordial and affectionate friendship.

The British government, not choosing to permit the union of the colonies as proposed at Albany, and to trust that union with their defense, lest they should thereby grow too military, and feel their own strength, suspicion and jealousies at this time being entertained of them, sent over General Braddock with two regiments of regular English troops for that purpose. He landed at Alexandria, in Virginia, and

thence marched to Fredericktown, in Maryland, where he halted for carriages. Our Assembly apprehending, from some information, that he had received violent prejudices against them, as averse to the service, wished me to wait upon him, not as from them, but as postmaster-general, under the guise of proposing to settle with him the mode of conducting with most celerity and certainty the despatches between him and the governors of the several provinces, with whom he must necessarily have continual correspondence, and of which they proposed to pay the expense. My son accompanied me on this journey.

We found the general at Fredericktown, waiting impatiently for the return of those he had sent through the back parts of Maryland and Virginia to collect wagons. I stayed with him several days, dined with him daily, and had full opportunities of removing his prejudices, by the information of what the Assembly had before his arrival actually done, and were still willing to do, to facilitate his operations. When I was about to depart, the returns of wagons to be obtained were brought in, by which it appeared that they amounted only to twenty-five, and not all of those in serviceable condition. The general and all the officers were surprised, declared the expedition was then at an end, being impossible; and exclaimed against the ministers for ignorantly sending them into a country destitute of the means of conveying their stores, baggage, &c., not less than one hundred and fifty wagons being necessary.

I happened to say I thought it was a pity they had not been landed in Pennsylvania, as in that country almost every farmer had his wagon. The general eagerly laid hold of my words, and said, "Then you, sir, who are a man of interest there, can probably procure them for us; and I beg you will undertake it." I asked what terms were to be offered the owners of the wagons; and I was desired to put on paper the terms that appeared to me necessary. This I did, and they were agreed to, and a commission and instructions accordingly prepared immediately. What those terms were will appear in the advertisement I published as soon as I arrived at Lancaster, which being, from the great and sudden effect it produced, a piece of some curiosity, I shall insert it at length, as follows:

"ADVERTISEMENT.

"Lancaster, April 26, 1755.

"Whereas, one hundred and fifty wagons, with four horses to each wagon, and fifteen hundred saddle or pack horses, are wanted for the service of his majesty's forces now about to rendezvous at Will's Creek, and his excellency General Braddock having been pleased to empower me to contract for the hire of the same, I hereby give notice that I shall attend for that purpose at Lancaster from this day to next Wednesday evening, and at York from next Thursday morning till Friday evening, where I shall be ready to agree for wagons and teams, or single horses, on the following terms, viz.: 1. That there shall



be paid for each wagon, with four good horses and a driver, fifteen shillings *per diem* ; and for each able horse with a pack-saddle, or other saddle and furniture, two shillings *per diem* ; and for each able horse without a saddle, eighteen pence *per diem*. 2. That the pay commence from the time of their joining the forces at Will's Creek, which must be on or before the 20th of May ensuing, and that a reasonable allowance be paid over and above for the time necessary for their traveling to Will's Creek and home again after their discharge. 3. Each wagon and team, and every saddle or pack horse, is to be valued by indifferent persons chosen between me and the owner ; and in case of the loss of any wagon, team, or other horse in the service, the price according to such valuation is to be allowed and paid. 4. Seven days' pay is to be advanced and paid in hand by me to the owner of each wagon and team, or horse, at the time of contracting, if required, and the remainder to be paid by General Braddock, or by the paymaster of the army, at the time of their discharge, or from time to time, as it shall be demanded. 5. No drivers of wagons, or persons taking care of the hired horses, are on any account to be called upon to do the duty of soldiers, or be otherwise employed than in conducting or taking care of their carriages or horses. 6. All oats, Indian corn, or other forage that wagons or horses bring to the camp, more than is necessary for the subsistence of the horses, is to be taken for the use of the army, and a reasonable price paid for the same.

“Note.—My son, William Franklin, is empowered to enter into like contracts with any person in Cumberland county. B. FRANKLIN.”

*“To the Inhabitants of the Counties of Lancaster, York, and Cumberland.”*

“Friends and Countrymen,

“Being occasionally at the camp at Frederic a few days since, I found the general and officers extremely exasperated on account of their not being supplied with horses and carriages, which had been expected from this province, as most able to furnish them; but, through the dissensions between our governor and Assembly, money had not been provided, nor any steps taken for that purpose.

“It was proposed to send an armed force immediately into these counties, to seize as many of the best carriages and horses as should be wanted, and compel as many persons into the service as would be necessary to drive and take care of them.

“I apprehended that the progress of British soldiers through these counties on such an occasion, especially considering the temper they are in, and their resentment against us, would be attended with many and great inconveniences to the inhabitants, and therefore more willingly took the trouble of trying first what might be done by fair and equitable means. The people of these back counties have lately complained to the Assembly that a sufficient currency was wanting; you have an opportunity of receiving and dividing among you a very considera-

ble sum ; for, if the service of this expedition should continue, as it is more than probable it will, for one hundred and twenty days, the hire of these wagons and horses will amount to upward of thirty thousand pounds, which will be paid you in silver and gold of the king's money.

“ The service will be light and easy, for the army will scarce march above twelve miles per day, and the wagons and baggage-horses, as they carry those things that are absolutely necessary to the welfare of the army, must march with the army, and no faster ; and are, for the army's sake, always placed where they can be most secure, whether in a march or in a camp.

“ If you are really, as I believe you are, good and loyal subjects to his majesty, you may now do a most acceptable service, and make it easy to yourselves ; for three or four of such as can not separately spare from the business of their plantations a wagon and four horses and a driver, may do it together, one furnishing the wagon, another one or two horses, and another the driver, and divide the pay proportionably between you ; but if you do not this service to your king and country voluntarily, when such good pay and reasonable terms are offered to you, your loyalty will be strongly suspected. The king's business must be done ; so many brave troops, come so far for your defense, must not stand idle through your backwardness to do what may be reasonably expected from you ; wagons and horses must be had ; violent measures will probably be



used, and you will be left to seek for a recompense where you can find it, and your case, perhaps, be little pitied or regarded.

“I have no particular interest in this affair, as, except the satisfaction of endeavoring to do good, I shall have only my labor for my pains. If this method of obtaining the wagons and horses is not likely to succeed, I am obliged to send word to the general in fourteen days; and I suppose Sir John St. Clair, the hussar, with a body of soldiers, will immediately enter the province for the purpose, which I shall be sorry to hear, because I am very sincerely and truly your friend and well-wisher,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

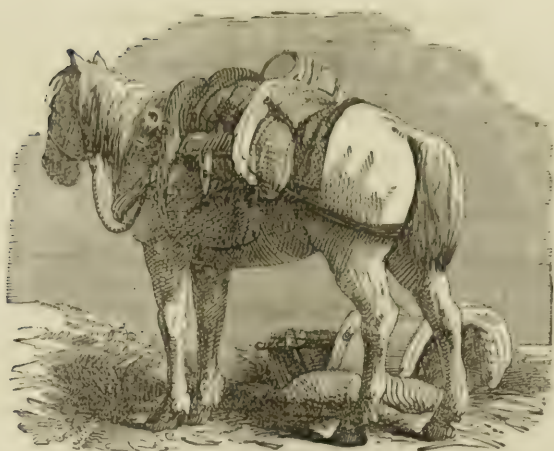
I received of the general about eight hundred pounds, to be disbursed in advance-money to the wagon owners; but that sum being insufficient, I advanced upward of two hundred pounds more, and in two weeks the one hundred and fifty wagons, with two hundred and fifty-nine carrying horses, were on their march for the camp. The advertisement promised payment according to the valuation, in case any wagons or horses should be lost. The owners, however, alleging they did not know General Braddock, or what dependence might be had on his promise, insisted on my bond for the performance, which I accordingly gave them.

While I was at the camp, supping one evening with the officers of Colonel Dunbar's regiment, he represented to me his concern for the subalterns,

who, he said, were generally not in affluence, and could ill afford, in this dear country, to lay in the stores that might be necessary in so long a march through a wilderness, where nothing was to be purchased. I commiserated their case, and resolved to endeavor procuring them some relief. I said nothing, however, to him of my intention, but wrote the next morning to the committee of the Assembly, who had the disposition of some public money, warmly recommending the case of these officers to their consideration, and proposing that a present should be sent them of necessaries and refreshments. My son, who had some experience of a camp life, and of its wants, drew up a list for me, which I enclosed in my letter. The committee approved, and used such diligence that, conducted by my son, the stores arrived at the camp as soon as the wagons. They consisted of twenty parcels, each containing

6 lbs loaf sugar.	1 Gloucester cheese.
6 do. Muscovado do.	1 keg containing 20 lbs. good butter
1 do. green tea.	2 dozen old Madeira wine.
1 do bohea do.	2 gallons Jamaica spirits.
6 do. ground coffee.	1 bottle flour of mustard.
6 do. chocolate.	2 well-cured hams.
$\frac{1}{2}$ chest best white biscuit.	$\frac{1}{2}$ dozen dried tongues.
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. pepper.	6 lbs. rice.
1 quart white vinegar.	6 lbs. raisins.

These parcels, well packed, were placed on as many horses, each parcel, with the horse, being intended as a present for one officer. They were very thankfully received, and the kindness acknowledged by letters to me from the colonels of both regiments, in the most grateful terms. The general,



too, was highly satisfied with my conduct in procuring him the wagons, and readily paid my account of disbursements, thanking me repeatedly, and requesting my further assistance in sending provisions after him. I undertook this also, and was busily employed in it till we heard of his defeat, advancing for the service, of my own money, upward of one thousand pounds sterling, of which I sent him an account. It came to his hands, luckily for me, a few days before the battle, and he returned me immediately an order on the paymaster for the round sum of one thousand pounds, leaving the remainder to the next account. I consider this payment as good luck, having never been able to obtain that remainder, of which more hereafter.

This general was, I think, a brave man, and might probably have made a figure as a good officer in some European war. But he had too much self-confidence, too high an opinion of the validity of regular troops, and too mean a one of both Americans and Indians. George Croghan, our Indian in-



terpreter, joined him on his march with one hundred of those people, who might have been of great use to his army as guides and scouts, if he had treated them kindly; but he slighted and neglected them, and they gradually left him.

In conversation with him one day, he was giving me some account of his intended progress. "After taking Fort Duquesne," said he, "I am to proceed to Niagara; and, having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time; and I suppose it will, for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days; and then I see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara." Having before revolved in my mind the long line his army must make in their march by a very narrow road, to be cut for them through the woods and bushes, and also what I had read of a former defeat of fifteen hundred French, who invaded the Illinois country, I had conceived some doubts and some fears for the event of the campaign. But I ventured only to say, "To be sure, sir, if you arrive well before Duquesne, with these fine troops, so well provided with artillery, the fort, though completely fortified, and assisted with a very strong garrison, can probably make but a short resistance. The only danger I apprehend of obstruction to your march is from the ambuscades of the Indians, who, by constant practice, are dexterous in laying and executing them; and the slender line, near four miles long, which your army must make, may expose it to be attacked by surprise in its flanks, and to be cut like a thread into several pieces, which

from their distance, can not come up in time to support each other."

He smiled at my ignorance, and replied, "These savages may, indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the king's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression." I was conscious of an impropriety in my disputing with a military man in matters of his profession, and said no more. The enemy, however, did not take the advantage of his army which I apprehended its long line of march exposed it to, but let it advance without interruption till within nine miles of the place; and then, when more in a body (for it had just passed a river, where the front had halted till all were come over), and in a more open part of the woods than any it had passed, attacked its advanced guard by a heavy fire from behind trees and bushes, which was the first intelligence the general had of an enemy's being near him. This guard being disordered, the general hurried the troops up to their assistance, which was done in great confusion, through wagons, baggage, and cattle; and presently the fire came upon their flank: the officers, being on horseback, were more easily distinguished, picked out as marks, and fell very fast; and the soldiers were crowded together in a huddle, having or hearing no orders, and standing to be shot at till two thirds of them were killed; and then, being seized with a panic, the remainder fled with precipitation.

The wagoners took each a horse out of his team





and scampered ; their example was immediately followed by others ; so that all the wagons, provisions, artillery, and stores were left to the enemy. The general, being wounded, was brought off with difficulty ; his secretary, Mr. Shirley, was killed by his side ; and out of eighty-six officers, sixty-three were killed or wounded, and seven hundred and fourteen men killed of eleven hundred. These eleven hundred had been picked men from the whole army ; the rest had been left behind with Colonel Dunbar, who was to follow with the heavier part of the stores, provisions, and baggage. The flyers, not being pursued, arrived at Dunbar's camp, and the panic they brought with them instantly seized him and all his people ; and, though he had now above one thousand men, and the enemy who had beaten Braddock did not at most exceed four hundred Indians and French together, instead of proceeding, and endeav-



oring to recover some of the lost honor, he ordered all the stores, ammunition, &c., to be destroyed, that he might have more horses to assist his flight toward the settlements, and less lumber to remove. He was there met with requests from the governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, that he would post his troops on the frontiers, so as to afford some protection to the inhabitants; but he continued his hasty march through all the country, not thinking himself safe till he arrived at Philadelphia, where the inhabitants could protect him. This whole transaction gave us Americans the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the prowess of British regular troops had not been well founded.

In their first march, too, from their landing till they got beyond the settlements, they had plundered and stripped the inhabitants, totally ruining some poor families, besides insulting, abusing, and confining the people if they remonstrated. This was enough to put us out of conceit of such defenders, if we had really wanted any. How different was the conduct of our French friends in 1781, who, during a march through the most inhabited part of our country, from Rhode Island to Virginia, near seven hundred miles, occasioned not the smallest complaint for the loss of a pig, a chicken, or even an apple.

Captain Orme, who was one of the general's aids-de-camp, and, being grievously wounded, was brought off with him, and continued with him to his death, which happened in a few days, told me that he was totally silent all the first day and at night only said,

“Who would have thought it!” That he was silent again the following day, saying only at last, “We shall better know how to deal with them another time;” and died in a few minutes after.

The secretary’s papers, with all the general’s orders, instructions, and correspondence, falling into the enemy’s hands, they selected and translated into French a number of the articles, which they printed, to prove the hostile intentions of the British court before the declaration of war. Among these I saw some letters of the general to the ministry, speaking highly of the great service I had rendered the army, and recommending me to their notice. David Hume, who was some years after secretary to Lord Hertford, when minister in France, and afterward to General Conway, when secretary of state, told me he had seen among the papers in that office letters from Braddock highly recommending me. But, the expedition having been unfortunate, my service, it seems, was not thought of much value, for those recommendations were never of any use to me.

As to rewards from himself, I asked only one, which was, that he would give orders to his officers not to enlist any more of our bought servants, and that he would discharge such as had been already enlisted. This he readily granted, and several were accordingly returned to their masters, on my application. Dunbar, when the command devolved on him, was not so generous. He being at Philadelphia, on his retreat, or rather flight, I applied to him for the discharge of the servants of three poor farmers

of Lancaster county that he had enlisted, reminding him of the late general's orders on that head. He promised me that, if the masters would come to him at Trenton, where he should be in a few days on his march to New York, he would there deliver their men to them. They accordingly were at the expense and trouble of going to Trenton, and there he refused to perform his promise, to their great loss and disappointment.

As soon as the loss of the wagons and horses was generally known, all the owners came upon me for the valuation which I had given bond to pay. Their demands gave me a great deal of trouble. I acquainted them that the money was ready in the paymaster's hands, but the order for paying it must first be obtained from General Shirley, and that I had applied for it; but, he being at a distance, an answer could not soon be received, and they must have patience. All this, however, was not sufficient to satisfy them, and some began to sue me. General Shirley at length relieved me from this terrible situation by appointing commissioners to examine the claims, and ordering payment. They amounted to near twenty thousand pounds, which to pay would have ruined me.

Before we had the news of this defeat, the two Doctors Bond came to me with a subscription paper for raising money to defray the expense of a grand firework, which it was intended to exhibit at a rejoicing on receiving the news of our taking Fort Duquesne. I looked grave, and said it would, I



thought, be time enough to prepare the rejoicing when we knew we should have occasion to rejoice. They seemed surprised that I did not immediately comply with their proposal. "Why the d—l!" said one of them, "you surely don't suppose that the fort will not be taken?" "I don't know that it will not be taken, but I know that the events of war are subject to great uncertainty." I gave them the reasons of my doubting; the subscription was dropped, and the projectors thereby missed the mortification they would have undergone if the firework had been prepared. Dr. Bond, on some other occasion afterward, said that he did not like Franklin's forebodings.

## CHAPTER XI.

GOVERNOR MORRIS, who had continually worried the Assembly with message after message before the defeat of Braddock, to beat them into the making of acts to raise money for the defense of the province, without taxing, among others, the proprietary estates, and had rejected all their bills for not having such an exempting clause, now redoubled his attacks with more hope of success, the danger and necessity being greater. The Assembly, however, continued firm, believing they had justice on their side, and that it would be giving up an essential right if they suffered the governor to amend their money-bills. In one of the last, indeed, which was for granting fifty thousand pounds, his proposed amendment was only of a single word. The bill expressed "that all estates, real and personal, were to be taxed, those of the proprietaries *not* excepted." His amendment was, for *not* read *only*: a small, but very material alteration. However, when the news of the disaster reached England, our friends there, whom we had taken care to furnish with all the Assembly's answers to the governor's messages, raised a clamor against the proprietaries for their meanness and injustice in giving their governor such instructions; some going so far as to say that, by obstructing the

defense of their province, they forfeited their right to it. They were intimidated by this, and sent orders to their receiver-general to add five thousand pounds of their money to whatever sum might be given by the Assembly for such purpose.

This, being testified to the House, was accepted in lieu of their share of a general tax, and a new bill was formed, with an exempting clause, which passed accordingly. By this act I was appointed one of the commissioners for disposing of the money, sixty thousand pounds. I had been active in modeling the bill and procuring its passage, and had, at the same time, drawn one for establishing and disciplining a voluntary militia, which I carried through the House without much difficulty, as care was taken in it to leave the Quakers at liberty. To promote the association necessary to form the militia, I wrote a dialogue, stating and answering all the objections I could think of to such a militia, which was printed, and had, as I thought, great effect.

While the several companies in the city and country were forming, and learning their exercise, the governor prevailed with me to take charge of our North-western frontier, which was infested by the enemy, and provide for the defense of the inhabitants by raising troops and building a line of forts. I undertook this military business, though I did not conceive myself well qualified for it. He gave me a commission with full powers, and a parcel of blank commissions for officers, to be given to whom I thought fit. I had but little difficulty in raising



men, having soon five hundred and sixty under my command. My son, who had in the preceding war been an officer in the army raised against Canada, was my aid-de-camp, and of great use to me. The Indians had burned Gnadenhutzen, a village settled by the Moravians, and massacred the inhabitants; but the place was thought a good situation for one of the forts.

In order to march thither, I assembled the companies at Bethlehem, the chief establishment of these people. I was surprised to find it in so good a posture of defense; the destruction of Guadenhutzen had made them apprehend danger. The principal buildings were defended by a stockade; they had purchased a quantity of arms and ammunition from New York, and had even placed quantities of small paving stones between the windows of their high stone houses, for their women to throw down upon the heads of any Indians that should attempt to force into them. The armed brethren, too, kept watch, and relieved each other on guard, as methodically as in any garrison town. In conversation with the bishop, Spangenberg, I mentioned my surprise; for, knowing they had obtained an act of Parliament exempting them from military duties in the colonies, I had supposed they were conscientiously scrupulous of bearing arms. He answered me that it was not one of their established principles, but that, at the time of their obtaining that act, it was thought to be a principle with many of their people. On this occasion, however, they, to

their surprise, found it adopted by but a few. It seems they were either deceived in themselves, or deceived the Parliament; but common sense, aided by present danger, will sometimes be too strong for whimsical opinions.

It was the beginning of January when we set out upon this business of building forts. I sent one detachment toward the Minisink, with instructions to erect one for the security of that upper part of the country, and another to the lower part, with similar instructions; and I concluded to go myself with the rest of my force to Gnadenhutten, where a fort was thought more immediately necessary. The Moravians procured me five wagons for our tools, stores, and baggage.

Just before we left Bethlehem, eleven farmers, who had been driven from their plantations by the Indians, came to me requesting a supply of firearms, that they might go back and bring off their cattle. I gave them each a gun with suitable ammunition. We had not marched many miles before it began to rain, and it continued raining all day; there were no habitations on the road to shelter us, till we arrived near night at the house of a German, where, and in his barn, we were all huddled together, as wet as water could make us. It was well we were not attacked in our march, for our arms were of the most ordinary sort, and our men could not keep the locks of their guns dry. The Indians are dexterous in contrivances for that purpose, which we had not. They met that day the eleven poor farmers above



mentioned, and killed ten of them. The one that escaped informed us that his and his companions' guns would not go off, the priming being wet with the rain.

The next day being fair, we continued our march, and arrived at the desolated Gnadenhutzen. There was a mill near, round which were left several pine boards, with which we soon huttet ourselves; an operation the more necessary at that inclement season, as we had no tents. Our first work was to bury more effectually the dead we found there, who had been half interred by the country people.

The next morning our fort was planned and marked out, the circumference measuring four hundred and fifty-five feet, which would require as many palisades to be made, one with another, of a foot diameter each. Our axes, of which we had seventy, were immediately set to work to cut down trees, and, our men being dexterous in the use of them,



great despatch was made. Seeing the trees fall so fast, I had the curiosity to look at my watch when two men began to cut at a pine; in six minutes they had it upon the ground, and I found it of fourteen inches diameter. Each pine made three palisades of eighteen feet long, pointed at one end. While these were preparing, our other men dug a trench all round, of three feet deep, in which the palisades were to be planted; and, the bodies being taken off our wagons, and the fore and hind wheels separated by taking out the pin which united the two parts of the perch, we had ten carriages, with two horses each, to bring the palisades from the woods to the spot. When they were set up, our carpenters built a platform of boards all round within, about six feet high, for the men to stand on when to fire through the loopholes. We had one swivel gun, which we mounted on one of the angles, and fired it as soon as fixed, to let the Indians know, if any were within hearing, that we had such pieces; and thus our fort, if that name may be given to so miserable a stockade, was finished in a week, though it rained so hard every other day that the men could not work.

This gave me occasion to observe, that, when men are employed, they are best contented; for on the days they worked they were good-natured and cheerful, and, with the consciousness of having done a good day's work, they spent the evening jollily; but on our idle days they were mutinous and quarrelsome, finding fault with the pork, the bread, &c..

and were continually in bad humor, which put me in mind of a sea-captain, whose rule it was to keep his men constantly at work ; and, when his mate once told him that they had done every thing, and there was nothing further to employ them about, “Oh,” said he, “make them scour the anchor.”

This kind of fort, however contemptible, is a sufficient defense against Indians, who have no cannon. Finding ourselves now posted securely, and having a place to retreat to on occasion, we ventured out in parties to scour the adjacent country. We met with no Indians, but we found the places on the neighboring hills where they had lain to watch our proceedings. There was an art in their contrivance of those places that seems worth mentioning. It being winter, a fire was necessary for them ; but a common fire on the surface of the ground would by its light have discovered their position at a distance. They had therefore dug holes in the ground about three feet in diameter, and somewhat deeper ; we found where they had with their hatchets cut off the charcoal from the sides of burnt logs lying in the woods. With these coals they had made small fires in the bottoms of the holes, and we observed among the weeds and grass the prints of their bodies, made by their lying all round, with their legs hanging down in the holes to keep their feet warm, which, with them, is an essential point. This kind of fire, so managed, could not discover them, either by its light, flame, sparks, or even smoke : it appeared that the number was not great,

and it seems they saw we were too many to be attacked by them with prospect of advantage.

We had for our chaplain a zealous Presbyterian minister, Mr. Beatty, who complained to me that the men did not generally attend his prayers and exhortations. When they enlisted, they were promised, besides pay and provisions, a gill of rum a day, which was punctually served out to them, half in the morning, and the other half in the evening; and I observed they were punctual in attending to receive it; upon which I said to Mr. Beatty, "It is, perhaps, below the dignity of your profession to act as steward of the rum, but if you were only to distribute it out after prayers, you would have them all about you." He liked the thought, undertook the task, and, with the help of a few hands to measure out the liquor, executed it to satisfaction, and never were prayers more generally and more punctually attended; so that I think this method preferable to the punishment inflicted by some military laws for non-attendance on divine service.

I had hardly finished this business, and got my fort well stored with provisions, when I received a letter from the governor, acquainting me that he had called the Assembly, and wished my attendance there, if the posture of affairs on the frontiers was such that my remaining there was no longer necessary. My friends, too, of the Assembly, pressing me by their letters to be, if possible, at the meeting, and my three intended forts being now completed, and the inhabitants contented to remain on their



farms under that protection, I resolved to return ; the more willingly, as a New England officer, Colonel Clapham, experienced in Indian war, being on a visit to our establishment, consented to accept the command. I gave him a commission, and, parading the garrison, had it read before them, and introduced him to them as an officer who, from his skill in military affairs, was much more fit to command them than myself; and, giving them a little exhortation, took my leave. I was escorted as far as Bethlehem, where I rested a few days to recover from the fatigue I had undergone. The first night, lying in a good bed, I could hardly sleep, it was so different from my hard lodging on the floor of a hut at Gnadenhutten, with only a blanket or two.

While at Bethlehem, I inquired a little into the practice of the Moravians: some of them had accompanied me, and all were very kind to me. I found they worked for a common stock, ate at common tables, and slept in common dormitories, great numbers together. In the dormitories I observed loopholes, at certain distances all along just under the ceiling, which I thought judiciously placed for change of air. I went to their church, where I was entertained with good music, the organ being accompanied with violins, hautboys, flutes, clarinets, &c. I understood their sermons were not usually preached to mixed congregations of men, women, and children, as is our common practice, but that they assembled sometimes the married men, at other times their wives, then the young men, the young

women, and the little children, each division by itself. The sermon I heard was to the latter, who came in and were placed in rows on benches; the boys under the conduct of a young man, their tutor, and the girls conducted by a young woman. The discourse seemed well adapted to their capacities, and was delivered in a pleasing, familiar manner, coaxing them, as it were, to be good. They behaved very orderly, but looked pale and unhealthy, which made me suspect they were kept too much within doors, or not allowed sufficient exercise.

I inquired concerning the Moravian marriages, whether the report was true that they were by lot. I was told that lots were used only in particular cases; that generally, when a young man found himself disposed to marry, he informed the elders of his class, who consulted the elder ladies that governed the young women. As these elders of the different sexes were well acquainted with the tempers and dispositions of their respective pupils, they could best judge what matches were suitable, and their judgments were generally acquiesced in; but if, for example, it should happen that two or three young women were found to be equally proper for the young man, the lot was then resorted to. I objected, if the matches are not made by the mutual choice of the parties, some of them may chance to be very unhappy. "And so they may," answered my informer, "if you let the parties choose for themselves;" which, indeed, I could not deny.

Being returned to Philadelphia, I found the asso-

ciation went on with great success, the inhabitants that were not Quakers having pretty generally come into it, formed themselves into companies, and chose their captains, lieutenants, and ensigns, according to the new law. Dr. Bond visited me, and gave me an account of the pains he had taken to spread a general good liking to the law, and ascribed much to those endeavors. I had the vanity to ascribe all to my *Dialogue*; however, not knowing but that he might be in the right, I let him enjoy his opinion, which I take to be generally the best way in such cases. The officers, meeting, chose me to be colonel of the regiment, which I this time accepted. I forget how many companies we had, but we paraded about twelve hundred well-looking men, with a company of artillery, who had been furnished with six brass field-pieces, which they had become so expert in the use of as to fire twelve times in a minute. The first time I reviewed my regiment they accompanied me to my house, and would salute me with some rounds fired before my door, which shook down and broke several glasses of my electrical apparatus. And my new honor proved not much less brittle; for all our commissions were soon after broken by a repeal of the law in England.

During this short time of my colonelship, being about to set out on a journey to Virginia, the officers of my regiment took it into their heads that it would be proper for them to escort me out of town, as far as the Lower Ferry. Just as I was getting on horseback they came to my door, between thirty and forty,



mounted, and all in their uniforms. I had not been previously acquainted with their project, or I should have prevented it, being naturally averse to the assumption of state on any occasion; and I was a good deal chagrined at their appearance, as I could not avoid their accompanying me. What made it worse was, that, as soon as we began to move, they drew their swords and rode with them naked all the way. Somebody wrote an account of this to the proprietor, and it gave him great offense. No such honor had been paid to him when in the province, nor to any of his governors; and he said it was only proper to princes of the blood royal, which may be true for aught I know, who was, and still am, ignorant of the etiquette in such cases.

This silly affair, however, greatly increased his rancor against me, which was before considerable, on account of my conduct in the Assembly respecting the exemption of his estate from taxation, which I had always opposed very warmly, and not without severe reflections on the meanness and injustice of contending for it. He accused me to the ministry as being the great obstacle to the king's service, preventing, by my influence in the House, the proper form of the bills for raising money; and he instanced the parade with my officers as a proof of my having an intention to take the government of the province out of his hands by force. He also applied to Sir Everard Fawkener, the postmaster-general, to deprive me of my office; but it had no other effect than to procure from Sir Everard a gentle admonition.







Notwithstanding the continual wrangle between the governor and the House, in which I, as a member, had so large a share, there still subsisted a civil intercourse between that gentleman and myself, and we never had any personal difference. I have sometimes since thought that his little or no resentment against me, for the answers it was known I drew up to his messages, might be the effect of professional habit, and that, being bred a lawyer, he might consider us both as merely advocates for contending clients in a suit, he for the proprietaries, and I for the Assembly. He would, therefore, sometimes call in a friendly way to advise with me on difficult points, and sometimes, though not often, take my advice.

We acted in concert to supply Braddock's army with provisions; and, when the shocking news arrived of his defeat, the governor sent in haste for me, to consult with him on measures for preventing the desertion of the back counties. I forget now the advice I gave; but I think it was, that Dunbar should be written to, and prevailed with, if possible, to post his troops on the frontiers for their protection, until, by re-enforcements from the colonies, he might be able to proceed in the expedition. And, after my return from the frontier, he would have had me undertake the conduct of such an expedition with provincial troops, for the reduction of Fort Duquesne, Dunbar and his men being otherwise employed; and he proposed to commission me as general. I had not so good an opinion of my military abilities as he professed to have, and I believe his

professions must have exceeded his real sentiments but probably he might think that my popularity would facilitate the business with the men, and influence in the Assembly the grant of money to pay for it, and that, perhaps, without taxing the proprietary. Finding me not so forward to engage as he expected, the project was dropped, and he soon after left the government, being superseded by Captain Denny.

Before I proceed in relating the part I had in public affairs under this new governor's administration, it may not be amiss to give here some account of the rise and progress of my philosophical reputation.

In 1746, being in Boston, I met there with a Dr. Spence, who was lately arrived from Scotland, and showed me some electric experiments. They were imperfectly performed, as he was not very expert; but, being on a subject quite new to me, they equally surprised and pleased me. Soon after my return to Philadelphia, our library company received from Mr. Peter Collinson, Fellow of the Royal Society of London, a present of a glass tube, with some account of the use of it in making such experiments. I eagerly seized the opportunity of repeating what I had seen at Boston; and, by much practice, acquired great readiness in performing those, also, which we had an account of from England, adding a number of new ones. I say much practice, for my house was continually full, for some time, with persons who came to see these new wonders.

To divide a little this incumbrance among my friends, I caused a number of similar tubes to be blown in our glass-house, with which they furnished themselves, so that we had at length several performers. Among these, the principal was Mr. Kinnersley, an ingenious neighbor, who, being out of business, I encouraged him to undertake showing the experiments for money, and drew up for him two lectures, in which the experiments were ranged in such order, and accompanied with explanations in such method, as that the foregoing should assist in comprehending the following. He procured an elegant apparatus for the purpose, in which all the little machines that I had roughly made for myself were neatly formed by instrument makers. His lectures were well attended, and gave great satisfaction; and after some time he went through the colonies, exhibiting them in every capital town, and picked up some money. In the West India islands, indeed, it was with difficulty the experiments could be made, from the general moisture of the air.

Obliged as we were to Mr. Collinson for the present of the tube, &c., I thought it right he should be informed of our success in using it, and wrote him several letters containing accounts of our experiments. He got them read in the Royal Society, where they were not at first thought worth so much notice as to be printed in their *Transactions*. One paper, which I wrote for Mr. Kinnersley, on the sameness of lightning with electricity, I sent to Mr. Mitchel, an acquaintance of mine, and one of the



members also of that society, who wrote me word that it had been read, but was laughed at by the connoisseurs. The papers, however, being shown to Dr. Fothergill, he thought them of too much value to be stifled, and advised the printing of them. Mr. Collinson then gave them to Cave for publication in his *Gentleman's Magazine*; but he chose to print them separately in a pamphlet, and Dr. Fothergill wrote the preface. Cave, it seems, judged rightly for his profession, for by the additions that arrived afterward, they swelled to a quarto volume, which has had five editions, and cost him nothing for copy-money.

It was, however, some time before those papers were much taken notice of in England. A copy of them happening to fall into the hands of the Count



de Buffon, a philosopher deservedly of great reputation in France, and, indeed, all over Europe, he pre-

vailed with M. Dubourg to translate them into French, and they were printed at Paris. The publication offended the Abbé Nollet, preceptor in Natural Philosophy to the royal family, and an able experimenter, who had formed and published a theory of electricity, which then had the general vogue. He could not at first believe that such a work came from America, and said it must have been fabricated by his enemies at Paris, to oppose his system. Afterward, having been assured that there really existed such a person as Franklin at Philadelphia, which he had doubted, he wrote and published a volume of Letters, chiefly addressed to me, defending his theory, and denying the verity of my experiments, and of the positions deduced from them.

I once purposed answering the abbé, and actually began the answer; but, on consideration that my writings contained a description of experiments which any one might repeat and verify, and, if not to be verified, could not be defended; or of observations offered as *conjectures*, and not delivered dogmatically, therefore not laying me under any obligation to defend them; and reflecting that a dispute between two persons, written in different languages, might be lengthened greatly by mistranslations, and thence misconceptions of one another's meaning, much of one of the abbé's letters being founded on an error in the translation, I concluded to let my papers shift for themselves, believing it was better to spend what time I could spare from public busi-

ness in making new experiments, than in disputing about those already made. I therefore never answered M. Nollet, and the event gave me no cause to repent my silence; for my friend M. Le Roy, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, took up my cause and refuted him; my book was translated into the Italian, German, and Latin languages; and the doctrine it contained was by degrees generally adopted by the philosophers of Europe, in preference to that of the abbé; so that he lived to see himself the last of his sect, except Monsieur B——, of Paris, his *élève* and immediate disciple.

What gave my book the more sudden and general celebrity, was the success of one of its proposed experiments, made by Messieurs Dalibard and De Lor at Marly, for drawing lightning from the clouds. This engaged the public attention every where. M. De Lor, who had an apparatus for experimental philosophy, and lectured in that branch of science, undertook to repeat what he called the *Philadelphia Experiments*; and, after they were performed before the king and court, all the curious of Paris flocked to see them. I will not swell this narrative with an account of that capital experiment, nor of the infinite pleasure I received in the success of a similar one I made soon after with a kite at Philadelphia, as both are to be found in the histories of electricity.

Dr. Wright, an English physician, when at Paris, wrote to a friend, who was of the Royal Society, an account of the high esteem my experiments were in among the learned abroad, and of their wonder that



my writings had been so little noticed in England. The society, on this, resumed the consideration of the letters that had been read to them; and the celebrated Dr. Watson drew up a summary account of them, and of all I had afterward sent to England on the subject, which he accompanied with some praise of the writer. This summary was then printed in their *Transactions*; and some members of the society in London, particularly the very ingenious Mr. Canton, having verified the experiment of procuring lightning from the clouds by a pointed rod, and acquainted them with the success, they soon made me more than amends for the slight with which they had before treated me. Without my having made any application for that honor, they chose me a member, and voted that I should be excused the customary payments, which would have amounted to twenty-five guineas; and ever since have given me their *Transactions* gratis.\* They also presented me with the gold medal of Sir Godfrey Copley for the year 1753, the delivery of which was accompanied by a very handsome speech of the president, Lord Macclesfield, wherein I was highly honored.

\* In a letter to his son, Governor Franklin, the doctor gives an account of the manner in which he was thus admitted. Having, as a member of a committee of investigation, access to the records of the society, he found that his name was admitted on the list of members, with a vote of council that he was not to pay any thing. The vote of admission was unanimous, and the certificate, or application, was signed by the president, Lord Macclesfield, and Lords Parker and Willoughby. The usual fees were five guineas admission, and two and a half yearly contribution, or twenty-five for life membership.

## CHAPTER XII.

OUR new governor, Captain Denny, brought over for me the before-mentioned medal from the Royal Society, which he presented to me at an entertainment given him by the city. He accompanied it with very polite expressions of his esteem for me, having, as he said, been long acquainted with my character. After dinner, when the company, as was customary at that time, were engaged in drinking, he took me aside into another room, and acquainted me that he had been advised by his friends in England to cultivate a friendship with me, as one who was capable of giving him the best advice, and of contributing most effectually to the making his administration easy; that he therefore desired of all things to have a good understanding with me, and he begged me to be assured of his readiness on all occasions to render me every service that might be in his power. He said much to me, also, of the proprietor's good disposition toward the province, and of the advantage it would be to us all, and to me in particular, if the opposition that had been so long continued to his measures was dropped, and harmony restored between him and the people; in effecting which, it was thought no one could be more serviceable than myself; and I might depend on

adequate acknowledgments and recompenses. The drinkers, finding we did not return immediately to the table, sent us a decanter of Madeira, which the



governor made a liberal use of, and in proportion became more profuse of his solicitations and promises.

My answers were to this purpose: that my circumstances, thanks to God, were such as to make proprietary favors unnecessary to me; and that, being a member of the Assembly, I could not possibly accept of any; that, however, I had no personal enmity to the proprietary, and that, whenever the public measures he proposed should appear to be for the good of the people, no one would espouse and forward them more zealously than myself; my past opposition having been founded on this, that the measures which had been urged were evidently intended



to serve the proprietary interest, with great prejudice to that of the people; that I was much obliged to him (the governor) for his profession of regard to me, and that he might rely on every thing in my power to render his administration as easy as possible, hoping at the same time that he had not brought with him the same unfortunate instruction his predecessors had been hampered with.

On this he did not then explain himself; but when he afterward came to do business with the Assembly, they appeared again, the disputes were renewed, and I was as active as ever in the opposition, being the penman, first, of the request to have a communication of the instructions, and then of the remarks upon them, which may be found in the votes of the times, and in the *Historical Review* I afterward published. But between us personally no enmity arose; we were often together; he was a man of letters, had seen much of the world, and was entertaining and pleasing in conversation. He gave me information that my old friend Ralph was still alive; that he was esteemed one of the best political writers in England; had been employed in the dispute between Prince Frederic and the king, and had obtained a pension of three hundred pounds a year; that his reputation was indeed small as a poet, Pope having damned his poetry in the Dunciad; but his prose was thought as good as any man's.

The Assembly finally finding the proprietary obstinately persisted in shackling the deputies with instructions inconsistent not only with the privileges

of the people, but with the service of the crown, resolved to petition the king against them, and appointed me their agent to go over to England, to present and support the petition. The House had sent up a bill to the governor, granting a sum of sixty thousand pounds for the king's use (ten thousand pounds of which was subjected to the orders of the then general, Lord Loudoun), which the governor, in compliance with his instructions, absolutely refused to pass.

I had agreed with Captain Morris, of the packet at New York, for my passage, and my stores were put on board, when Lord Loudoun arrived at Philadelphia, expressly, as he told me, to endeavor an accommodation between the governor and Assembly, that his majesty's service might not be obstructed by their dissensions. Accordingly, he desired the governor and myself to meet him, that he might hear what was to be said on both sides. We met and discussed the business. In behalf of the Assembly, I urged the various arguments that may be found in the public papers of that time, which were of my writing, and are printed with the minutes of the Assembly; and the governor pleaded his instructions, the bond he had given to observe them, and his ruin if he disobeyed, yet seemed not unwilling to hazard himself if Lord Loudoun would advise it. This his lordship did not choose to do, though I once thought I had nearly prevailed with him to do it; but finally he rather chose to urge the compliance of the Assembly; and he entreated me to use my

endeavors with them for that purpose, declaring that he would spare none of the king's troops for the defense of our frontiers, and that, if we did not continue to provide for that defense ourselves, they must remain exposed to the enemy.

I acquainted the House with what had passed, and, presenting them with a set of resolutions I had drawn up, declaring our rights, that we did not relinquish our claim to those rights, but only suspended the exercise of them on this occasion through *force*, against which we protested, they at length agreed to drop that bill, and frame another conformable to the proprietary instructions. This of course the governor passed, and I was then at liberty to proceed on my voyage. But, in the mean time, the packet had sailed with my sea-stores, which was some loss to me, and my only recompense was his lordship's thanks for my service, all the credit of obtaining the accommodation falling to his share.

He set out for New York before me; and, as the time for dispatching the packet-boats was at his disposition, and there were two then remaining there, one of which, he said, was to sail very soon, I requested to know the precise time, that I might not miss her by any delay of mine. The answer was, "I have given out that she is to sail on Saturday next; but I may let you know, *entre nous*, that if you are there by Monday morning, you will be in time, but do not delay longer." By some accidental hinderance at a ferry, it was Monday noon before I arrived, and I was much afraid she might have sailed,



as the wind was fair; but I was soon made easy by the information that she was still in the harbor, and would not move till the next day. One would imagine that I was now on the very point of departing for Europe. I thought so; but I was not then so well acquainted with his lordship's character, of which *indecision* was one of the strongest features. I shall give some instances. It was about the beginning of April that I came to New York, and I think it was near the end of June before we sailed. There were then two of the packet-boats, which had been long in readiness, but were detained for the general's letters, which were always to be ready *to-morrow*. Another packet arrived; she too was detained; and, before we sailed, a fourth was expected. Ours was the first to be dispatched, as having been there longest. Passengers were engaged for all, and some extremely impatient to be gone, and the merchants uneasy about their letters, and for the orders they had given for insurance (it being war time), and for autumnal goods; but their anxiety availed nothing; his lordship's letters were not ready; and yet whoever waited on him found him always at his desk, pen in hand, and concluded he must needs write abundantly.

Going myself one morning to pay my respects, I found in his antechamber one Innis, a messenger of Philadelphia, who had come thence express with a packet from Governor Denny for the general. He delivered to me some letters from my friends there, which occasioned my inquiring when he was to re-

turn, and where he lodged, that I might send some letters by him. He told me he was ordered to call to-morrow at nine for the general's answer to the governor, and should set off immediately. I put my letters into his hands the same day. A fortnight after I met him again in the same place. "So, you are soon returned, Innis?" "Returned! no, I am not gone yet." "How so?" "I have called here this and every morning these two weeks past for his lordship's letters, and they are not yet ready." "Is it possible, when he is so great a writer? for I see him constantly at his escritoire." "Yes," said Innis, "but he is like St. George on the signs, *always*



*on horseback, and never rides on."* This observation of the messenger was, it seems, well founded; for, when in England, I understood that Mr. Pitt, afterward Lord Chatham, gave it as one reason for removing this general, and sending Generals Amherst and Wolfe, *that the minister never heard from him, and could not know what he was doing.*

In this daily expectation of sailing, and all the three packets going down to Sandy Hook, to join the fleet there, the passengers thought it best to be on board, lest by a sudden order the ships should sail, and they be left behind. There, if I remember, we were about six weeks, consuming our sea-stores, and obliged to procure more. At length the fleet sailed, the general and all his army on board, bound to Louisburg, with intent to besiege and take that fortress; and all the packet-boats in company were ordered to attend the general's ship, ready to receive his dispatches when they should be ready. We were out five days before we got a letter with leave to part, and then our ship quitted the fleet and steered for England. The other two packets he still detained, carried them with him to Halifax, where he stayed some time to exercise the men in sham attacks upon sham forts, then altered his mind as to besieging Louisburg, and returned to New York, with all his troops, together with the two packets above mentioned, and all their passengers! During his absence the French and savages had taken Fort George, on the frontier of that province, and the Indians had massacred many of the garrison after capitulation.

I saw afterward in London Captain Bound, who commanded one of those packets. He told me that, when he had been detained a month, he acquainted his lordship that his ship was grown foul, to a degree that must necessarily hinder her fast sailing, a point of consequence for a packet-boat, and request-



ed an allowance of time to heave her down and clean her bottom. His lordship asked how long a time that would require. He answered, three days. The general replied, "If you can do it in one day, I give leave; otherwise not; for you must certainly sail the day after to-morrow." So he never obtained leave, though detained afterward from day to day during full three months.

I saw also in London one of Bonell's passengers, who was so enraged against his lordship for deceiving and detaining him so long at New York, and then carrying him to Halifax and back again, that he swore he would sue him for damages. Whether he did or not, I never heard; but, as he represented it, the injury to his affairs was very considerable.

On the whole, I wondered much how such a man came to be intrusted with so important a business as the conduct of a great army; but, having since seen more of the great world, and the means of obtaining, and motives for giving, places and employments, my wonder is diminished. General Shirley, on whom the command of the army devolved upon the death of Braddock, would, in my opinion, if continued in place, have made a much better campaign than that of Loudoun in 1756, which was frivolous, expensive, and disgraceful to our nation beyond conception; for, though Shirley was not bred a soldier, he was sensible and sagacious in himself, and attentive to good advice from others, capable of forming judicious plans, and quick and active in carrying them into execution. Loudoun, instead

of defending the colonies with his great army, left them totally exposed, while he paraded idly at Halifax, by which means Fort George was lost ; besides, he deranged all our mercantile operations, and distressed our trade, by a long embargo on the exportation of provisions, on pretense of keeping supplies from being obtained by the enemy, but in reality for beating down their price in favor of the contractors, in whose profits, it was said, perhaps from suspicion only, he had a share ; and, when at length the embargo was taken off, neglecting to send notice of it to Charleston, where the Carolina fleet was detained near three months, and whereby their bottoms were so much damaged by the worm that a great part of them foundered in their passage home.

Shirley was, I believe, sincerely glad of being relieved from so burdensome a charge as the conduct of an army must be to a man unacquainted with military business. I was at an entertainment given by the city of New York to Lord Loudoun, on his taking upon him the command. Shirley, though thereby superseded, was present also. There was a great company of officers, citizens, and strangers, and, some chairs having been borrowed in the neighborhood, there was one among them very low, which fell to the lot of Mr. Shirley. I sat by him, and, perceiving it, said, "They have given you a very low seat." "No matter, Mr. Franklin," said he, "I find *a low seat* the easiest."

While I was, as before mentioned, detained at New York, I received all the accounts of the pro-

visions, &c., that I had furnished to Braddock, some of which accounts could not sooner be obtained from the different persons I had employed to assist in the business. I presented them to Lord Loudoun, desiring to be paid the balance. He caused them to be examined by the proper officer, who, after comparing every article with its voucher, certified them to be right; and his lordship promised to give me an order on the paymaster for the balance due to me. This was, however, put off from time to time; and, though I called often for it by appointment, I did not get it. At length, just before my departure, he told me he had, on better consideration, concluded not to mix his accounts with those of his predecessors. "And you," said he, "when in England, have only to exhibit your accounts to the treasury, and you will be paid immediately."

I mentioned, but without effect, a great and unexpected expense I had been put to by being detained so long at New York, as a reason for my desiring to be presently paid; and on my observing that it was not right I should be put to any further trouble or delay in obtaining the money I had advanced, as I charged no commission for my service, "O," said he, "you must not think of persuading us that you are no gainer; we understand better those matters, and know that every one concerned in supplying the army finds means, in the doing it, to fill his own pockets." I assured him that was not my case, and that I had not pocketed a farthing; but he appeared clearly not to believe me; and, indeed, I afterward



learned that immense fortunes are often made in such employments. As to my balance, I am not paid it to this day, of which more hereafter.

Our captain of the packet boasted much, before we sailed, of the swiftness of his ship ; unfortunately, when we came to sea, she proved the dullest of ninety-six sail, to his no small mortification. After many conjectures respecting the cause, when we were near another ship almost as dull as ours, which, however, gained upon us, the captain ordered all hands to come aft, and stand as near the ensign staff as possible. We were, passengers included, about forty persons. While we stood there, the ship mended her pace, and soon left her neighbor far behind, which proved clearly what our captain suspected, that she was loaded too much by the head. The casks of water, it seems, had been all placed forward ; these he therefore ordered to be moved further aft, on which the ship recovered her character, and proved the best sailer in the fleet.

The captain said she had once gone at the rate of thirteen knots, which is accounted thirteen miles per hour. We had on board, as a passenger, Captain Archibald Kennedy, of the Royal Navy, who contended that it was impossible, and that no ship ever sailed so fast, and that there must have been some error in the division of the log-line, or some mistake in heaving the log. A wager ensued between the two captains, to be decided when there should be sufficient wind. Kennedy therefore examined the log-line, and, being satisfied with it, he

determined to throw the log himself. Some days after, when the wind was very fair and fresh, and the captain of the packet, Lutwidge, said he believed she then went at the rate of thirteen knots, Kennedy made the experiment, and owned his wager lost.

The foregoing fact I give for the sake of the following observation. It has been remarked, as an imperfection in the art of ship-building, that it can never be known, till she is tried, whether a new ship will or will not be a good sailer; for that the model of a good-sailing ship has been exactly followed in a new one, which has been proved, on the contrary, remarkably dull. I apprehend that this may partly be occasioned by the different opinions of seamen respecting the modes of loading, rigging, and sailing of a ship; each has his method; and the same vessel, laden by the method and orders of one captain, shall sail worse than when by the orders of another. Besides, it scarce ever happens that a ship is formed, fitted for the sea, and sailed by the same person. One man builds the hull, another rigs her, a third loads and sails her. No one of these has the advantage of knowing all the ideas and experience of the others, and, therefore, can not draw just conclusions from a combination of the whole.

Even in the simple operation of sailing when at sea, I have often observed different judgments in the officers who commanded the successive watches, the wind being the same. One would have the sails trimmed sharper or flatter than another, so that they seemed to have no certain rule to govern by. Yet

I think a set of experiments might be instituted, first, to determine the most proper form of the hull for swift sailing; next, the best dimensions and most proper place for the masts; then the form and quantity of sails, and their position, as the winds may be, and, lastly, the disposition of the lading. This is an age of experiments, and I think a set accurately made and combined would be of great use.

We were several times chased in our passage, but outsailed every thing, and in thirty days had soundings. We had a good observation, and the captain judged himself so near our port, Falmouth, that, if we made a good run in the night, we might be off the mouth of that harbor in the morning, and by running in the night might escape the notice of the enemy's privateers, who often cruised near the entrance of the Channel. Accordingly, all the sail was set that we could possibly carry, and the wind being very fresh and fair, we stood right before it, and made great way. The captain, after his observation, shaped his course, as he thought, so as to pass wide of the Scilly Rocks; but it seems there is sometimes a strong current setting up St. George's Channel, which formerly caused the loss of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's squadron in 1707. This was probably, also, the cause of what happened to us.

We had a watchman placed in the bow, to whom they often called, "*Look well out before there,*" and he as often answered, "*Ay, ay;*" but perhaps had his eyes shut, and was half asleep at the time, they sometimes answering, as is said, mechanically; for



he did not see a light just before us, which had been hid by the studding-sails from the man at the helm, and from the rest of the watch, but by an accidental yaw of the ship was discovered, and occasioned a great alarm, we being very near it, the light appearing to me as large as a cart-wheel. It was midnight, and our captain fast asleep; but Captain Kennedy, jumping upon deck, and seeing the danger, ordered the ship to wear round, all sails standing; an operation dangerous to the masts, but it carried us clear, and we avoided shipwreck, for we were running fast on the rocks on which the light was erected. This deliverance impressed me strongly with the utility of light-houses, and made me resolve to encourage the building some of them in America, if I should live to return thither.

In the morning it was found by the soundings that we were near our port, but a thick fog hid the



land from our sight. About nine o'clock the fog began to rise, and seemed to be lifted up from the water like the curtain of a theater, discovering underneath the town of Falmouth, the vessels in the harbor, and the fields that surround it. This was a pleasing spectacle to those who had been long without any other prospect than the uniform view of a vacant ocean, and it gave us the more pleasure, as we were now free from the anxieties which had arisen.\*

I set out immediately, with my son, for London, and we only stopped a little by the way to view Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, and Lord Pembroke's house and gardens, with the very curious antiquities at Wilton. We arrived in London the 27th of July, 1757.

\* In a letter from Dr. Franklin to his wife, dated at Falmouth, the 17th of July, 1757, after giving her a similar account of his voyage, escape, and landing, he adds: "The bell ringing for church, we went thither immediately, and, with hearts full of gratitude, returned sincere thanks to God for the mercies we had received. Were I a Roman Catholic, perhaps I should, on this occasion, vow to build a chapel to some saint; but as I am not, if I were to vow at all, it should be to build a *light-house*."



## CHAPTER XIII.

So far we have followed Franklin's own account of himself. His autobiography has not improperly been styled one of the most charming performances of the kind ever written. That it merits this encomium is evident from its popularity. Ease and simplicity of narrative will always find approval with the reader ; and many such performances as this of Dr. Franklin's, making much more pretension, have been received with a great deal less favor. Many have been consigned to the upper shelves of public libraries and the collections of the curious, to be drawn forth only when some industrious compiler disturbs the dust. Many more, though their subjects made noise enough in their day, having had their facts sifted out, have passed into the oblivion to which impartial Time dooms such performances as have their chief importance in the egotism of the author.

Perhaps a key to the charm of Dr. Franklin's autobiography may be found in the fact that it is uniformly and consistently written to one person. It has, therefore, the character of a familiar conversation with a single reader, who can not fail, for the nonce, to put himself in the place of the person addressed. It appears like a personal intercourse with



the venerable sage to read thus what has all the appearance of an unreserved confession of his secret thoughts, and a free declaration of his motives and impulses. But we must, in following the doctor through his narrative, be careful that we do not give too implicit credit to his seeming ingenuousness. No man ever commenced so elaborate an account of himself without a suspicion that it would eventually reach the public eye; and whatever may be said of the first portion of the work, we know that the part written at Passy was prepared at the solicitation of friends who had seen a manuscript copy of the beginning. The concluding portion, written at Philadelphia, Franklin thus speaks of in a letter to Benjamin Vaughan, under date of Philadelphia, October 24, 1788.

“I am now recovering from a long-continued gout, and am diligently employed in writing the History of my Life, to the doing of which, the persuasions contained in your letter of January 31, 1783, have not a little contributed. I am now in the year 1756, just before I was sent to England. To shorten the work, as well as for other reasons, I omit all facts and transactions that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader, by showing him, from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power, and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding the errors which were prejudicial to me. If a writer can judge properly of his own work, I fancy, on reading over

what is already done, that the book may be found entertaining and useful, more so than I expected when I began it. If my present state of health continues, I hope to finish it this winter: when done, you shall have a manuscript copy of it, that I may obtain from your judgment and friendship such remarks as may contribute to its improvement."

Dr. Franklin appears to have been in the habit of permitting his friends to read his narrative. To this circumstance, it is stated, that the world owed the first edition of the autobiography. A friend in France held the manuscript long enough to make a translation, which was issued from the press in Paris soon after the death of the author. A translation of the French work appeared in London; and edition after edition of the translation, and also of the original, have appeared in this country.

Autobiographies are usually apologies. As Dr. Franklin performed no act of his life, however apparently trifling, without a thought as to its ultimate influence and tendencies, it is evident that his "Life by Himself" can not be excepted from the definition of "An Apology for Himself." There are in it many direct pleas in defense of his acts. We can not, indeed, forbear the regret that a man who has so honestly confessed his errors has so skillfully defended them; or, perhaps we should say, that in the defense he has so dexterously made it appear that the errors were no such important transgressions, after all. The young, especially, in reading the Life of Franklin, need to be carefully upon their guard lest

they derive a wrong impression from the author's self-complacent declaration that on such and such occasions he "repaired" the errors of his life. Good and evil are not to be kept in account with each other, like debtor and creditor; and especially should we beware of the latent hint, that at the outset in life faults may be indulged in, and a debit account set down to virtue, with the reserved purpose of balancing it on the credit side by-and-by. In this regard, we can not help thinking that the doctor, while striving to do himself justice, has done himself a discredit. Though we are far from thinking that Franklin designedly borrowed the privilege of transgressing with the purpose of paying by reparation, yet he undoubtedly shared the common feeling of humanity in consoling himself with prospective repentance for present error; and what we would guard against is the apparent impression that he succeeded in "striking the balance." Nor would we even charge that he intended all that, in this respect, his narrative seems to convey. The weakness of his character was too blind, or perhaps we should say too keen, a pursuit of expediency; and yet, without this characteristic, he would not have been Franklin.

His remarkable prudence, both in his private affairs and in the public trusts which he had held in the colony, caused his appointment, as stated in the last chapter, as agent of the Assembly, to proceed to England with a remonstrance addressed to the proprietaries. As the colony had increased in popula-



tion, in trade, and in wealth, a diversity of interests and of opinions had grown up, which were incompatible with harmony under the apparently simple, but really complex system established by William Penn. The charter from the crown asserted political rights most ample; the Bill of Privileges granted by Penn established universal toleration in religion; the Legislature was elective, and the laws of the colony were left, in their conception and enactment, with the people. But the anomaly of a governor appointed by the proprietors, and, in fact, acting as their agent, his real council being the proprietaries in England, jarred with and defeated the apparent liberality of the system. Thus, while obvious political justice directed that all property holders should be taxed alike, the governors refused their assent to bills for revenue which did not exempt the proprietary domain from taxation; and while all religious creeds and professions were declared to be on an equality, the executive could refuse assent to laws which conflicted with the peculiar tenets of the Society of Friends. In relation to the defense of the colony, as the reader has already noted, evasion and management were resorted to to save the frontiers in the peril of invasion. An empire within an empire, such as Penn's original draft seemed to indicate, could only exist by the perfect obedience of the people, and their harmony with the proprietaries. The difficulties and embarrassments necessary to conflicting interests, and conflicting powers and rights, became so evident and harassing during

the lifetime of the founder of the colony, that Penn himself was on the point of surrendering a jurisdiction, fruitful principally in vexation, to the crown, reserving to his family only the right in property which the royal charter conferred. But this was not done; and the difficulties, irksome in the days of the father, were doubly so in the hands of the sons. Their deputy governors were placed in a most awkward relation. In conciliating the people, they offended the proprietaries, and were recalled; or their instructions were so pointed as to leave them no discretion, and their weary terms of service were spent in fruitless altercations with the Assembly.

No law was considered as finally enacted in Pennsylvania until it had received the royal sanction. By the terms of the original charter, all enactments were to be sent to Great Britain, and if, within five years, they were not disapproved of by the king, their approval was presumed. Subsequently, however, the terms of the charter were interfered with by instructions from the crown, that such acts as were supposed to affect the royal prerogative, or to involve points in dispute between Parliament and the colonies, should not be passed without a clause deferring their operation until they had received the royal sanction. The method in which a law was discussed in London was sufficiently humiliating to the pride of the Assembly; and as we review the process now, the wonder is that the tedious and dilatory proceedings did not sooner urge the provincial

Assembly into rebellion. An act of the provincial Assembly was first laid before the Board of Trade, as if the primary consideration in relation to the colony was a matter of pounds and pence; and the main object to be secured was that the Americans should not make any movement, unwatched, in which the interests of the British merchants and factors, and the revenue of the crown, should not be consulted. To make the colonies dependencies of the Board of Trade was a fatal error of the British crown; and in many of the revolutionary papers, and the writings which preceded the war of separation, we find evidences of the keenness with which the colonists felt and resented the insult; for such they considered it. The pecuniary bearing of the bill, if any it had, being ascertained and corrected, if it was deemed to need amendment, it went next to the king's solicitor, that the prerogative might be defended from encroachment. Thence it came back to the Board of Trade, and that body having acted upon it, it went before the king's council for final action. While these steps were in progress, the proprietaries kept an agent employed to watch the bill, and, if they took exceptions to it, to argue them before the Board of Trade. The Assembly was compelled, also, to appear before the Board by an agent; and thus, for every important act done by their representatives, the colony was, in effect, put upon trial. Franklin's mission was more comprehensive than had been intrusted to any previous agency. It was not only the reconciliation of a



present difficulty, but embraced the endeavor to remove the causes which impeded the general harmony and clogged the prosperity of the colony. To his discretion, and to his intimate knowledge of all points of the colonial business, the duty could be safely confided. The replies to the governor's addresses, in which the cause of the people was ably vindicated by the Legislature, were chiefly from his pen. He was the popular champion during the many years that he served in the provincial Assembly.

These replies, messages, and reports of the Assembly were published in London in a work entitled "An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania." It appeared anonymously in London early in the year 1759, and caused Dr. Franklin to receive a great deal of censure and abuse as the supposed author. This was, however, to have been anticipated from the very nature of the work, a controversial rather than a strictly impartial one; the charge against the proprietaries could but provoke reply from them and their friends; and the forcible language in which the oppressions of the people are depicted, left those assailed no choice but defense. Franklin never publicly admitted or denied the charge of authorship; but in an official letter, referring to the work, he speaks of it as one which "*we*" have in press, and thus admits that it was done with his privity. The reports and messages before alluded to, form a very large portion of the volume; other parts Dr. Franklin himself ac-

knowledges in a letter to David Hume, and the Dedication and Introduction are known to be from his pen. The Introduction we subjoin, as one of the happiest specimens of his style :

“To obtain an infinite variety of purposes by a few plain principles, is the characteristic of nature. As the eye is affected, so is the understanding; objects at a distance strike us according to their dimensions, or the quantity of light thrown upon them; near, according to their novelty or familiarity, as they are in motion or at rest. It is the same with actions. A battle is all motion, a hero all glare; while such images are before us, we can attend to nothing else. Solon and Lycurgus would make no figure in the same scene with the King of Prussia; and we are at present so lost in the military scramble on the Continent next us, in which, it must be confessed, we are deeply interested, that we have scarce time to throw a glance toward America, where we have also much at stake, and where, if any where, our account must be made up at last.

“We love to stare more than to reflect, and to be indolently amused at our leisure rather than commit the smallest trespass on our patience by winding a painful, tedious maze, which would pay us in nothing but knowledge.

“But then, as there are some eyes which can find nothing marvelous but what is marvelously great, so there are others which are equally disposed to marvel at what is marvelously little, and who can derive as much entertainment from their microscope

in examining a mite, as Dr. — in ascertaining the geography of the moon or measuring the tail of a comet.

“Let this serve as an excuse for the author of these sheets, if he needs any, for bestowing them on the transactions of a colony till of late hardly mentioned in our annals; in point of establishment one of the last upon the British list, and in point of rank one of the most subordinate; as being not only subject, in common with the rest, to the crown, but also to the claims of a proprietary, who thinks he does them honor enough in governing them by deputy; consequently, so much further removed from the royal eye, and so much the more exposed to the pressure of self-interested instructions.

“Considerable, however, as most of them for happiness of situation, fertility of soil, product of valuable commodities, number of inhabitants, shipping, amount of exportations, latitude of rights and privileges, and every other requisite for the being and well-being of society, and more considerable than any of them all for the celerity of its growth, unassisted by any human help but the vigor and virtue of its own excellent constitution.

“A father and his family, the latter united by interest and affection, the former to be revered for the wisdom of his institutions and the indulgent use of his authority, was the form it was at first presented in. Those who were only ambitious of repose, found it here; and as none returned with an evil report of the land, numbers followed, all partook of



the leaven they found ; the community still wore the same equal face ; nobody aspired, nobody was oppressed ; industry was sure of profit, knowledge of esteem, and virtue of veneration.

“ An assuming landlord, strongly disposed to convert free tenants into abject vassals, and to reap what he did not sow, countenanced and abetted by a few desperate and designing dependants on the one side, and on the other, all who have sense enough to know their rights and spirit enough to defend them, combined as one man against the said landlord and his encroachments, is the form it has since assumed.

“ And surely, to a nation born to liberty like this, bound to leave it unimpaired, as they received it from their fathers, in perpetuity to their heirs, and interested in the conservation of it in every appendage of the British empire, the particulars of such a contest can not be wholly indifferent.

“ On the contrary, it is reasonable to think the first workings of power against liberty, and the natural efforts of unbiassed men to secure themselves against the first approaches of oppression, must have a captivating power over every man of sensibility and discernment among us.

“ Liberty, it seems, thrives best in the woods. America best cultivates what Germany brought forth. And were it not for certain ugly comparisons, hard to be suppressed, the pleasure arising from such a research would be without alloy.

“ In the feuds of Florence, recorded by Machiavel,

we find more to lament and less to praise. Scarce can we believe the first citizens of the ancient republics had such pretensions to consideration, though so highly celebrated in ancient story. And as to ourselves, we need no longer have recourse to the late glorious stand of the French parliaments to excite our emulation.

“It is a known custom among farmers to change their corn from season to season for the sake of filling the bushel; and in case the wisdom of the age should condescend to make the like experiment in another shape, from hence we may learn whither to repair for the proper species.

“It is not, however, to be presumed, that such as have long been accustomed to consider the colonies in general as only so many dependencies on the council board, the Board of Trade, and the Board of Customs, or as a hotbed for causes, jobs, and other pecuniary emoluments, and as bound as effectually by instructions as by laws, can be prevailed upon to consider these patriot rustics with any degree of respect.

“Derision, on the contrary, must be the lot of him who imagines it in the power of the pen to set any luster upon them; and indignation theirs for daring to assert and maintain the independence interwoven in their Constitution, which now, it seems, is become an improper ingredient, and, therefore, to be excised away.

“But how contemptibly soever these gentlemen may talk of the colonies, how cheap soever they

may hold their Assemblies, or how insignificant the planters and traders who compose them, truth will be truth, and principle principle, notwithstanding.

“ Courage, wisdom, integrity, and honor are not to be measured by the sphere assigned them to act in, but by the trials they undergo and the vouchers they furnish ; and, if so manifested, need neither robes nor titles to set them off.”



## CHAPTER XIV.

It was one of the maxims of Dr. Franklin that "Time is money," and he was therefore anxious to apply himself at once to the business of his mission; but soon after his arrival in London he was attacked with an intermittent fever, which continued for nearly eight weeks; protracted, no doubt, by his efforts, in the intervals of apparent convalescence, to attend to the business with which he was intrusted. We find, in a letter to his wife, written toward the latter part of November, 1757, the common complaint against the English autumn. "On fair days, which are but few, I venture out *about noon*." We may remark, by the way, that in nothing is the careful and attentive character of Dr. Franklin, and his remembrance of his friends, better evinced than in his correspondence. The messages which he includes in his letters to all the friends of the persons addressed, the hundreds of commissions which he undertook, and the very many little unexpected acts of kindness to his absent friends with which he voluntarily charged himself, while they show the obliging disposition of the man, exhibit no less the benefit of method in the arrangement of time, and evince the capacity of the mind for grasping every thing, provided that order is preserved in the mental store-

house. That the man who had so many troublesome public matters upon his hands should find leisure for the pursuit of his philosophical studies and experiments, has been considered a remarkable circumstance. The wonder is increased when we review his correspondence, and find him, at the same time, making purchases for his wife and friends, and transmitting, with the ribbons, silks, laces, snuffers, music, salt-ladles, apple-corers, dessert services, breakfast-cloths, napkins, and garters, minute accounts of each, and directions in what manner they are to be applied. The style of his letters is also worthy of especial comment. Though showing evident marks of haste, and written with the negligent freedom of easy conversation, there are no useless repetitions, and not even the too frequent recurrence of the same words. The perspicuity which makes the writings of Franklin remarkable, arose from the clear arrangement of his subject in his mind, rather than from elaboration when he was about to commit his thoughts to paper.

Franklin was at first the guest of Mr. Peter Colinson, with whom, as a member of the Royal Society, he had corresponded. He then removed to the house of Mrs. Margaret Stevenson, No. 7 Craven-street, near the Strand. This house is still designated in the London Guide-books, and shown among the notables as the dwelling in which Franklin resided during his fifteen years' stay in London. Other memorials of him are preserved with the like care; for his course and rise, remarkable even among his

countrymen, were more observed in England, as presenting there a social anomaly, while here they are in perfect accordance with the republican theory. Thirty years before, Franklin the youth had visited London, friendless and almost helpless, finding himself in a strange land, the victim of the hollow and almost incomprehensible duplicity of Governor Keith. He had struggled with difficulties of no ordinary kind, and successfully; drawing improvement from experience, and treasuring up practical knowledge, until he had not only secured public confidence and trust amid his immediate friends and constituents at home, but had obtained a name with the learned and ingenious abroad, which was the warrant for his welcome. His philosophical correspondents, and the readers of his published essays and discoveries, vied with each other in their congratulatory offices and addresses; and the friends of those who had enjoyed direct communication with the illustrious American were eager to avail themselves of the opportunity of an introduction, and to embrace the privilege of tendering him civility. Eminently social and benevolent in his manners, much of his attention was given to the gratification of those who appreciated his pursuits. In a letter written by the proprietor, Thomas Penn, near the close of the mission of Franklin, in 1761, occurs this passage: "I do not find that he has done me any injury with any party, having had conversations with all, in which I have studied to talk of these affairs; and I believe he has spent most of his time in philosophical, and



especially in electrical matters, having generally company in a morning to see those experiments, and musical performances on glasses, where any one that knows him carries his friends."

In such society Franklin, who, it will be remembered, in his autobiography, acknowledges the possession of a reasonable share of vanity, found much gratification. But that his vanity was not of a disagreeable character is evident from the permanence of his friendships. He was now in his fifty-second year, and age had commenced to render what in others might seem assumption, in him a natural and pleasing authority. He never indulged in positive assertions, or permitted himself to give direct contradictions, but advanced his opinions rather as suggestions, and differed from his companions as one intimating doubts which they were supposed to be ready to remove. A mind less evenly balanced than his could not have withstood the extravagant laudation to which, at this, and even more at a later period in his life, he was exposed; but he humorously offset it against the violent abuse which he received from other quarters, and rejoiced that he had some enemies to remind him of his faults.

Among the friendships which he cherished—and we note it the more particularly that it was not one which could minister to his ambition—was that of Mrs. Stevenson. To the daughter of that lady, Miss Mary Stevenson, he was a most considerate friend, directing her studies, and improving her mind by valuable advice, which appears among the most

interesting passages of his correspondence. Some of his best papers on philosophical and learned subjects were in the form of letters, prepared for this young lady's perusal. The circumstance that she was for most of the time absent from her mother's house during his residence in England, caused the correspondence. It was not all, however, of a philosophical character, and the reader will be gratified with the introduction here of a specimen of the manner in which the philosopher and statesman could gracefully trifle :

“My dear Polly's good mamma bids me write two or three lines, by way of apology for her having omitted so long to write. She acknowledges the receiving of two agreeable letters from her beloved daughter, inclosing one for Sally Franklin, which was much approved (excepting one word only), and sent as directed.

“The reasons of her not writing are, that her time all day is fully taken up, during the daylight, with the care of her family, and—lying abed in the morning; and her eyes are so bad that she can not see to write in the evening—for playing at cards; so she hopes that one who is all goodness will certainly forgive her, when her excuses are so substantial. As for the secretary, he has not a word to say in his own behalf, though full as great an offender, but throws himself upon mercy; pleading only that he is, with the greatest esteem and sincerest regard, his dear Polly's ever affectionate friend,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

In another letter to the same young lady, we find the following advice upon the subject of reading :

“I would advise you to read with a pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or may be useful ; for this will be the best method of imprinting such facts on your memory, where they will be ready, either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or, at least, to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of curiosity. And as many of the terms of science are such as you can not have met with in your common reading, and may therefore be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you meet with a word you do not comprehend the precise meaning of. This may at first seem troublesome and interrupting ; but it is a trouble that will daily diminish, as you will daily find less and less occasion for your dictionary, as you become more and more acquainted with the terms ; and, in the mean time, you will read with more satisfaction, because more understanding.”

The reader will feel a natural desire to know something of the after life of a person in whom Dr. Franklin was so much interested. She was married in 1770 to William Hewson, a distinguished anatomist, whose works those familiar with medical literature will readily recall. He died in 1774, leaving his widow with three infant children ; and the advantage of her solid education was evinced in the



manner in which they were trained for usefulness and distinction. Mrs. Stevenson, the mother, died in 1783; Mrs. Hewson removed with her children to America in 1786, and died at Bristol, Pa., in 1795. The list of eminent physicians for which the city of Philadelphia is remarkable, includes the son of Mrs. Mary Hewson.

The proverbial dilatoriness of public bodies, and the influence of the proprietaries, whose purpose was served by delay, prevented any progress being made in the business with which Franklin was intrusted during the first year that he remained in England. He found the public mind and the attention of the government too much engrossed with the war on the Continent, and with European politics, to be diverted from these pressing and immediately important subjects to the concerns of a colony. The business upon which he was dispatched, however deeply important to the colonists themselves, presented no national bearing which required instant notice. The proprietors artfully improved the state of the public mind by producing, either directly through their agents, or through the influence of their friends upon the press, an impression unfavorable to the colonists. As a specimen of these acts, we quote a paragraph which appeared in "The Citizen, or General Advertiser," of September 9, 1757:

"The last letters from Philadelphia bring accounts of the scalping of the inhabitants of the back provinces by the Indians; at the same time, the disputes between the governor and the Assembly are carried

on to as great a height as ever, and the messages sent from the Assembly to the governor, and from the governor to the Assembly, are expressed in terms which give very little hopes of reconciliation. The bill to raise money is clogged so as to prevent the governor from giving his consent to it; and the obstinacy of the Quakers in the Assembly is such that they will in no shape alter it; so that, while the enemy is in the heart of the country, cavils prevent any thing being done for its relief. Mr. Denny is the third governor with whom the Assembly has had these disputes within a few years."

At the first glance at the above paragraph, it may appear singular that the proprietors should procure the publication of allegations against the Quakers. But this difficulty is removed by the fact that, of William Penn's six children, all except two abandoned the tenets of their father; and Thomas and Richard Penn, the proprietors during Franklin's agency, were not members of the Society of Friends. For the rest, it is difficult to conceive a statement more artfully drawn up, or better adapted for its purpose. The air of gentle candor, and of seeming disinterestedness with which it is prepared, carries the impression of its authorship by a party unconcerned in the issue, who states facts without comment, satisfied that they are of themselves glaring enough to supersede the need of remark. The effect of such publications upon a community whose attention had been invoked to the known differences between the proprietaries and the people, may be

readily imagined. To counteract the influence of this and similar publications, an article was prepared for *The General Advertiser*, over the signature of William Franklin. In this the separate allegations and implications are taken up in their order, and conclusively disproved.

The answer of Franklin shows, first, that the colony of Pennsylvania was not peculiar in its loss of frontier settlers by the savages, the same dangers attending the borderers in all the colonies. The out-settlers were not Quakers, but had arms, provided by the Assembly, and used them; but when the sentinels posted round an army were often killed and scalped while on duty, it was much easier to surprise a poor ploughman at work in the field. The disputes between the governor and the Assembly were shown to be upon the point of the taxation of the proprietary domains. As to the Quaker influence in the Assembly, as only twelve out of thirty-six members who composed that body were Friends, their resistance could avail nothing, if exerted. The records of the Assembly in past years were quoted to show that the Quakers had voted large sums "for the king's use," which were applied to the defense of the province, and consented to heavy grants of provision for troops in arms. The bill said to be "clogged and prevented" was passed in the spring preceding, granting one hundred thousand pounds for the defense of the colony; and the assertion that the enemy was in the "heart of the country" was denied as untrue, either at that time, or at any pre-



vious period. The fact was also exhibited that Pennsylvania had done more for its own defense, and for the assistance of its neighbors, than any other colony. To this triumphant answer no reply was ever attempted. If it failed in producing any immediate action on the part of the proprietors, it answered the double purpose, with like publications, of disabusing the public mind of wrong impressions, and of giving the opinions and statements of the agent of Pennsylvania a weight which was afterward applied to important purposes.

Indeed, no other man could have filled the mission so well as he. A purely political character, in the indisposition which existed to listen to any thing relative to America, would have been forced into insignificance. Social position, obtained by the ordinary methods, could not have prevented this consequence, as he might have maintained his place in the saloons, and still have effected nothing in the councils. But his philosophical reputation, increased by intercourse with the learned, and by the further discoveries which he prosecuted, introduced whatever he wrote, or was supposed to have written, to a wider circle than political pamphlets and newspaper essays usually attain; and the history of the state of the public mind in England anterior to the Revolution, and during its progress, exhibits many of the influential friends of America as among the personal friends and correspondents of Benjamin Franklin.

## CHAPTER XV.

AMONG Franklin's friends in England was Mr. William Strahan, a printer, distinguished alike for the integrity of his character, his eminent practical talents, and his success in life. Similarity of pursuits, and a resemblance in their fortunes, both having risen from obscurity, made the friendship between the two printers intimate. Mr. Strahan was printer to the king, and in 1755 was elected to Parliament. If we may judge from some specimens of his correspondence, we must conclude him not to have been unapt as a courtier. In a letter to Mrs. Franklin, written in 1757, her husband and his son, and her daughter, Miss Sally Franklin, are as skillfully complimented as was possible for the ingenuity of a flatterer. Where the praise approaches hyperbole, the effect of the extravagance is dexterously averted by a little pleasantry. Franklin is pronounced to be a man of singular merit, and perfectly agreeable; and while some men are amiable in one view, and some in another, he is said to be amiable in all. The son is extolled as affording, in his character, the prospect that the father's virtues and usefulness to his country would be prolonged beyond the period of his own life; and of the daughter he says, "I wish I could call her mine."

The prayer of the petition of this epistle was that Mrs. Franklin would visit England. In this the writer did not succeed, nor was he more successful in a subsequent proposal, in 1760, that Franklin should remain in England, and persuade his wife and daughter to come over. While Franklin admitted the excellence of the character of Mr. Strahan, and the amiable and agreeable dispositions of his family; and while he saw in the business opening a most eligible one, his attachment to his own country, and the invincible repugnance of his wife against crossing the Atlantic, precluded his entertaining the proposal, advantageous as it seemed in all particulars. There would seem, however, a reasonable probability, that if Mrs. Franklin had seconded, instead of discouraging the proposition, or if she had even ventured upon a visit to England, the course of the life of Franklin might have been altered. Although we can not doubt that he would have remained the warm friend of America, and the untiring advocate of popular rights, his influence might have been retained in aiding the changes which have taken place in the old country, rather than exerted in molding the character and founding the institutions of the new. On such apparent trifles hang the course of men and the destiny of nations.

It may be well in this place to finish what remains to be said of Mr. Strahan, in connection with our work. As already stated, he was elected to Parliament in 1775. Previously to that event, he had held conversations and correspondence with Frank-







lin, of which the difficulties in America formed the theme. His friend's views, however, failed to make Mr. Strahan a convert to what Franklin deemed the liberal and just course. On the 5th of July, 1775, Franklin wrote the following from Philadelphia:

"MR. STRAHAN: You are a member of Parliament, and one of that majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have begun to burn our towns and murder our people. Look upon your hands: they are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am yours,

"B. FRANKLIN."

This letter, which was published in the London papers soon after its receipt, was the subject of a great deal of remark. That there was no bitterness of personal feeling between the friends, is evident from the fact that their correspondence, interrupted by the Revolutionary war, was never wholly abandoned, and was resumed at a later period with a great deal of warmth and earnestness of friendship. The apparent harshness of the above note is in the conclusion; but it is palpably evident, from its face, that the writer merely yielded to the temptation to give a common and usually unmeaning form a terse and significant epigrammatic turn. Indeed, it may have been, and most probably was, an after thought, which occurred at the instant. Mr Strahan died, at an advanced age, in 1785, and the



last letter which he received from Franklin (1784) contains a pleasant review of the events of the war, and of the friendship of the writers, which we extract :

“You ‘fairly acknowledge that the late war terminated quite contrary to your expectation.’ Your expectation was ill founded; for you would not believe your old friend, who told you repeatedly that by those measures England would lose her colonies, as Epictetus warned in vain his master that he would break his leg. You believed rather the tales you heard of our poltroonery, and impotence of body and mind. Do you not remember the story you told me of the Scotch sergeant who met with a party of forty American soldiers, and, though alone, disarmed them all and brought them in prisoners? a story almost as improbable as that of an Irishman, who pretended to have alone taken and brought in five of the enemy by *surrounding* them. And yet, my friend, sensible and judicious as you are, but partaking of the general infatuation, you seemed to believe it. \* \* \* Yankee was understood to be a sort of Yahoo, and the Parliament did not think the petitions of such creatures were fit to be received and read in so wise an assembly. What was the consequence of this monstrous pride and insolence? You first sent small armies to subdue us, believing them more than sufficient, but soon found yourselves obliged to send greater; these, whenever they ventured to penetrate our country beyond the protection of their ships,

were either repulsed and obliged to scamper out, or were surrounded, beaten, and taken prisoners. An American planter, who had never seen Europe, was chosen by us to command our troops, and continued during the whole war. This man sent home to you, one after another, five of your best generals baffled, their heads bare of laurels, disgraced even in the opinion of their employers. Your contempt of our understandings, in comparison with your own, appeared to be much better founded than that of our courage, if we may judge by this circumstance, that in whatever court of Europe a Yankee negotiator appeared, the wise British minister was routed, put in a passion, picked a quarrel with your friends, and was sent home with a flea in his ear. But, after all, my dear friend, do not imagine that I am vain enough to ascribe our success to any superiority in any of those points. I am too well acquainted with all the springs and levers of our machine not to see that our human means were unequal to our undertaking, and that, if it had not been for the justice of our cause, and the consequent interposition of Providence, in which we had faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an Atheist, I should now have been convinced of the being and government of a Deity! It is He that abases the proud and favors the humble. May we never forget His goodness to us, and may our future conduct manifest our gratitude!

“But let us leave these serious reflections, and converse with our usual pleasantries. I remember

your observing once to me, as we sat together in the House of Commons, that no two journeymen printers within your knowledge had met with such success in the world as ourselves. You were then at the head of your profession, and soon afterward became member of Parliament. I was an agent for a few provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different modes. I, as a Republican printer, always liked a form well *planed down*, being averse to those *overbearing* letters that hold their heads so *high* as to hinder their neighbors from appearing. You, as a monarchist, chose to work upon *crown* paper, and found it profitable, while I worked upon *pro patria* (often, indeed, called *foolscap*) with no less advantage. Both our *heaps hold out* very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty good *day's work* of it. With regard to public affairs (to continue in the same style), it seems to me that your *compositors* in your *chapel* do not *cast off their copy well*, nor perfectly understand *imposing*: their *forms*, too, are continually pestered by the *outs* and *doubles* that are not easy to be *corrected*; and I think they were wrong in laying aside some *faces*, and particularly some *headpieces*, that would have been both useful and ornamental. But, courage! The business may still flourish with good management, and the master become as rich as any of the company. \* \*

“I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,  
B. FRANKLIN.”

Upon Franklin's first arrival in England, as ap-



pears by letters to his wife, he looked forward to months as a long stay, and indulged in the hope that he would return in the autumn. But in January, 1758, six months after his arrival, he was compelled to the unwilling admission that the public business would detain him for twelve months at least from that date. He had been able to do no more in relation to the affairs of the colony than to prepare and digest his facts for the lawyers who appeared for the Assembly, that they might be ready whenever the public business permitted, and the dilatory measures of the proprietaries would suffer it, to appear before the Board of Trade. Time never hung heavily upon Franklin's hands. The frequent publications, and the philosophical and curious pursuits in which he was engaged, were varied by journeys in search of his family connections, and those of his wife, and by acceptance of the civilities tendered to him by his many friends. Among his excursions this year were two visits with his son to the University of Cambridge, the second being by invitation to be present at the Commencement exercises. In a letter to his wife, he says, "We were present at all the ceremonies, dined every day in their halls, and my vanity was not a little gratified by the particular regard shown me by the chancellor and vice-chancellor of the University, and the heads of colleges."

From Cambridge he proceeded in search of the collateral branches of the Franklin family in England. Sufficient is said in the opening of his autobiography upon this subject for the general reader,

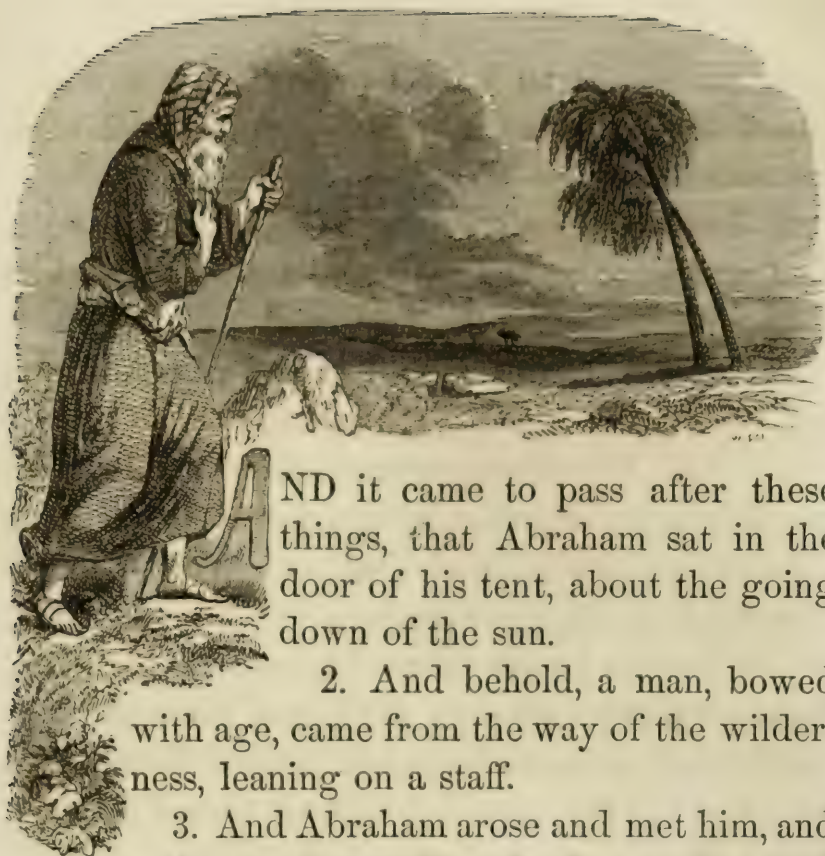
and we will only add to it what he has there omitted: that, wherever he found these relatives in need, he conferred upon them substantial aid and benefit. The fact that any were poor and obscure was an additional motive for searching them out, and in his letter to his wife, giving an account of this excursion, he records many minute circumstances which, though unimportant to his biography in themselves, are interesting as marking his character in two particulars. One of these is the care he preserved for his wife's gratification in the minutest respect, sparing no trouble to interest her. The other point is the sturdy independence of conventional forms which he manifested in identifying himself with the poor and the humble. To us this may seem a small matter, and one rather of pride than otherwise; but it must be recollected that Franklin was, in these feelings, a hundred years in advance of his time. At this period the theory of a republic was perhaps entertained by him and by others, but it must have been more as a theory than with any hope of its practical operation. Americans before the Revolution were loyal subjects, and deferred, perhaps, with more reverence than English residents, to power and title, and their conventional limits and usages. To the English feeling Americans added respect for the island itself, as "home," and the "father-land," the center of power, and the guide in learning and in arts. Nothing, indeed, annoyed them more than the distinctions made between them and other British subjects, as they were proud to consider themselves.

In the month of February, 1759, the University of St. Andrew's conferred upon Franklin the degree of Doctor of Laws. If the conferring of college honors in America was a source of honest pride to him, we may imagine that compliments from the venerable institutions of Europe gave him much more gratification, particularly as no false modesty could lead him to feel that these honors were not honestly deserved. They were not, as in some cases, his introduction to the society of the learned, but followed the estimation with which he was held by those who were attracted to his friendship by his practical knowledge, and his eminently useful writings and discoveries. During a visit made to Scotland in the summer of 1759, Franklin met Henry Home, Lord Kames, with whom he afterward frequently corresponded, Dr. Robertson, and many others of the distinguished men who marked this era as one of the most brilliant in Scottish literature. Of the time spent in that country, Dr. Franklin speaks, in a letter to Lord Kames, as six weeks of the densest happiness he ever experienced in his life. The exchange of the writings of Kames and of Franklin, and the mutual respect entertained by each for the other, show an intimacy founded on high esteem, and a sincerity which lasted until the death of Lord Kames. Many years the senior of Franklin, he died eight years before him, in 1782.

Connected with the history of the acquaintance of Franklin and Lord Kames is a curious literary anecdote. While on his visit to Lord Kames, Frank-



lin read or recited his well-known "Parable against Persecution." Lord Kames inserted it in his work entitled "Sketches of the History of Man," published in the year 1774. He there prefaced it with the remark that it was communicated to him by Dr. Franklin, of Philadelphia; "a man who makes a great figure in the learned world, and who would make a still greater figure for benevolence and candor, were virtue as much regarded in this declining age as knowledge." The parable we here annex:



AND it came to pass after these things, that Abraham sat in the door of his tent, about the going down of the sun.

2. And behold, a man, bowed with age, came from the way of the wilderness, leaning on a staff.

3. And Abraham arose and met him, and said unto him, "Turn in, I pray thee, and wash thy feet, and tarry all night, and thou shalt arise early on the morrow, and go on thy way."

4. But the man said, "Nay, for I will abide under this tree."

5. And Abraham pressed him greatly; so he turned, and they went into the tent, and Abraham baked unleavened bread, and they did eat.

6. And when Abraham saw that the man blessed not God, he said unto him, "Wherefore dost thou not worship the most high God, Creator of heaven and earth?"

7. And the man answered and said, "I do not worship the God thou speakest of, neither do I call

upon his name ; for I have made to myself a god, which abideth alway in mine house, and provideth me with all things."

8. And Abraham's zeal was kindled against the man, and he arose and fell upon him, and drove him forth with blows into the wilderness.

9. And at midnight God called unto Abraham, saying, "Abraham, where is the stranger?"

10. And Abraham answered and said, "Lord, he would not worship thee, neither would he call upon thy name ; therefore have I driven him out from before my face into the wilderness."

11. And God said, "Have I borne with him these hundred ninety and eight years, and nourished him, and clothed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me ; and couldst not thou, that art thyself a sinner bear with him one night?"

12. And Abraham said, "Let not the anger of the Lord wax hot against his servant ; lo, I have sinned ; lo, I have sinned ; forgive me, I pray thee."

13. And Abraham arose, and went forth into the wilderness, and sought diligently for the man, and found him, and returned with him to the tent ; and when he had entreated him kindly, he sent him away on the morrow with gifts.

14. And God spake again unto Abraham, saying, "For this thy sin shall thy seed be afflicted four hundred years in a strange land ;

15. "But for thy repentance will I deliver them ; and they shall come forth with power, and with gladness of heart, and with much substance."



Lord Kames omitted in his version all after the eleventh verse. Whether this was an error, or an intentional alteration, is not known; but the dignity of the parable certainly gains nothing by the four last verses. It is complete, and more emphatic in its lesson, closing at the eleventh, than with the somewhat awkward addition of the last verses. So probably Lord Kames thought; and it is a curious fact, that the very part which Lord Kames omitted is the only portion which Franklin claims as original. The parable itself is of Eastern origin, and a version of it has been discovered in the Persian. It was undoubtedly derived from the Hebrew traditions; and as that people would not carelessly tamper with the prophecies relating to their nation, the foreign addition of the doctor betrays itself. Franklin never published the parable, but arranged it in the form in which it appears for the purpose of reading it, as if from the Bible, and amusing himself with the comments of those who heard it. He complains, in a letter written in 1789, that the publication by Lord Kames cut him off from this source of amusement. After enjoying the remarks of his hearers, it was his habit to expose the deception, and he generally followed it with amusing anecdotes of those who had been deceived with it on previous occasions. At about the same time that Franklin prepared the Parable against Persecution, he dressed up another Jewish tradition inculcating Brotherly Love. With this, however, he had not the same success as with the other, and laid it aside.

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN June, 1760, the business upon which Franklin was sent to England was satisfactorily concluded; that is to say, so far as the principle was concerned for which he mainly contended, that the estates of the proprietaries should be subject to taxation, like other property in the colony. There were several other acts sent over at the same time for approval, which the proprietaries opposed, and which were repealed, but that in which the domains of the Penn family were put on the same footing with other landed property was approved. On this came the principal struggle between the proprietors and the Assembly, and very great efforts were made to defeat it; but, by concessions on the part of Dr. Franklin, which, without affecting the principle involved, removed certain objections alleged by the proprietaries, the bill was carried, and the proprietors submitted, with the reserved intention, probably, of defeating, or attempting to defeat, the operation of the act by forced constructions afterward. At any rate, whether such was the intention of the proprietors or not, the conduct of their governor indicated that such was the policy of his principals. The ultimate appeal to the crown, which had been a part of Dr. Franklin's discretionary business, he judged it

prudent to defer. In the contests between the proprietaries and the Assembly, the Penns did not neglect to avail themselves of the apparent community of interest with the ministry, which, as grantees of the crown, they felt; and they managed so to exhibit the danger the prerogative might incur by a victory of the Assembly over the proprietaries, that Franklin perceived that the time was not propitious for attempting to secure or defend any extension of popular rights in the colony. And the course he took met with the general approbation of his constituents.

In this year appeared one of the most important of Franklin's political productions, the "Canada Pamphlet." Franklin had earnestly advocated the conquest of Canada by Great Britain, having endeavored to obtain an introduction to the minister, Mr. Pitt, with the view of suggesting and urging that conquest, as well as of acting in reference to the affairs of Pennsylvania. But the minister was, to quote a letter of Franklin's, "too great a man, or too much occupied in affairs of greater moment." Probably he saw impolicy in receiving the accredited agent of Pennsylvania. While the disputes in reference to the colony were made sufficiently perplexing by other circumstances, it would not aid in relieving the difficulty, or in harmonizing the conflicting parties, to put it in the power of one of them to charge that the other had the ear of the administration. What information Franklin could give, however, the minister obtained through his secretaries



who cultivated an intimacy with the American, and to whom he did not fail to impart what he desired to communicate to the principal.

As the war with France drew near a close, the terms of peace became the subject of public discussion. Several pamphlets were published, some advocating the retention of Canada, others that of Guadaloupe. Franklin entered the lists in an anonymous tract, entitled "The Interest of Great Britain considered with Regard to her Colonies, and the Acquisition of Canada and Guadaloupe." The most remarkable passage in this performance, to the present reader, is that in which, after speaking of the separate provincial governments in America, and their jealousy of each other, he declares that he *had not the least conception* that their growth could make them dangerous to the mother country. He says:

"If they could not agree to unite for their defense against the French and Indians, who were perpetually harassing their settlements, burning their villages, and murdering their people, can it reasonably be supposed that there is any danger of their uniting against their own nation, which protects and encourages them, with which they have so many connections and ties of blood, interest, and affection, and which, it is well known, they all love much more than they love one another? In short, there are so many causes which operate to prevent it, that I will venture to say that a union among them for such a purpose is not merely improbable, *it is impossible*. And if the union of the whole is impossible,

the attempt of a part must be madness, as those colonies which did not join the rebellion would join the mother country in suppressing it. When I say such a union is impossible, I mean without the most grievous tyranny and oppression. People who have property in a country which they may lose, and privileges which they may endanger, are generally disposed to be quiet, and to bear much rather than hazard all. While the government is mild and just, while important civil and religious rights are secure, such subjects will be dutiful and obedient. The waves do not rise but when the winds blow."

The pamphlet, throughout, is written in the tone of a true Briton and a loyal subject. The defense of the colonists against the charge that this acquisition of territory was devised by them, and that the war was an affair of the colonies, while it is most masterly and convincing, is so conducted that no one could, from this part of the pamphlet, suspect an American of its authorship. He showed that the interest of landholders did not lay in the increase of land under the colonial protection. He argued that density of population leads to manufactures, and that by hemming the colonists in, their attention might necessarily be turned to manufactures for support, while in giving them a wider field as agriculturists, the true interests of Great Britain would be considered. If the object was to check the growth of the colonies, he pronounced *check* a modest word for the massacre of women and children, and intimated that the command of Pharaoh to the midwives suggested

a precedent for a course which he pronounced less cruel. "By this means you may keep the colonies to their present size. And if they were under the hard alternative of submitting to the one or the other of these for checking their growth, I dare answer for them, they would prefer the latter."

The obvious arguments for the retention of Canada on the ground of removing an enemy from the colonial borders, are ably brought forward; and in defense of the positions taken, not only the history of the colonies, and their relations with Great Britain, but examples from other nations, ancient as well as modern, are cited with great appositiveness. It has been usually said that the retention of the Canadas was one of the train of events which led to the independence of the United States. In its effect upon France, this may be true. Treaties between powerful nations are not likely to be permanent in their peaceful influence where one party is compelled to make humiliating sacrifices to the other, and the readiness of France to embrace the quarrel of America undoubtedly had no small part of its origin in the loss of her American colonies. The false security of the British cabinet before the Revolution may also be assigned, in part, to the removal of their dangerous rival on the northern borders; but these considerations by no means detract from the sagacity of Franklin, or the soundness of his argument, as stated in the pamphlet, that, "If the visionary danger of independence in our colonies is to be feared, nothing is more likely to render it substantial than



the neighborhood of foreigners at enmity with the sovereign government, capable of giving either aid or an asylum, as the event shall require."

During the remainder of the time spent at this visit in Europe, we find comparatively little public traces of Dr. Franklin. He resumed more fully the philosophical studies which his public avocations had in some measure interrupted, and among his scientific papers and letters we find many which bear date about this period. His visits to remarkable places, and his communications with the ingenious and the curious, afforded him hints for many interesting experiments. Those who remarked phenomena referred them to him for solution, and those who performed experiments detailed to him the processes and their results. He never failed to repeat the observations and experiments thus described to him, whenever practicable, and it was seldom, indeed, the case that his investigations did not produce new light upon every subject which he undertook. One can not too much admire the candor with which he acknowledges the labor of others, and the acknowledgments he makes where their discoveries or experiments have corrected his errors, or removed the wrong impressions of education or of opinions adopted at second hand.

During the summer of 1761 he visited the Continent of Europe; and of this excursion, though we have no incidents recorded, we perceive in his correspondence the effects, in many curious reasonings, based upon common things, which millions before

his time and since have observed without perceiving. The effect of the shallowness of water in a canal in Holland, in retarding the progress of the boat in which he traveled on one of his tours, gave the hint for observations which he made afterward on the Thames, and for experiments which he conducted with a great deal of patience and exactness. This, like most of his investigations, had a practical bearing, as he wished to determine the utility of taking into consideration depth in the many projects then on foot for digging canals. These experiments, like many others in which Franklin interested himself, may appear to us puerile, since they were undertaken to investigate facts now familiar to every school-boy. But we are to remember that this very circumstance, the familiarity of the truths which he discovered or examined, is in great part due to his labors; and to smile at Franklin's experiments is as if we were to laugh at Columbus for discovering America, because any fisherman can now find his way to that continent.

In April, 1762, the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on Franklin by the University of Oxford. Edinburgh paid him a like compliment. Many distinguished men in England expressed their regrets, personally or by letter, at his departure for America, which took place in August, after a residence in England of five years. Five months would probably have seemed a long period to him at the beginning of his mission. During his stay in England he was appointed by the Assembly of Pennsylvania to re-

ceive the proportion of the Parliamentary grant to that colony for its expenses in the late war, amounting to thirty thousand pounds. The governor in Pennsylvania opposed his appointment, and the proprietors in England labored to thwart him, but the ministry gave no heed to the opposition. The money was accordingly paid to Franklin, as the agent of the Assembly. He was directed to place it in the Bank of England, but that institution refused to receive it on the terms directed by the Assembly, it being contrary to their settled rules to take charge of money subject to the order of unknown persons residing in distant countries. By direction of the Assembly, the sum was invested in the stocks. An ill-timed resolve of the Assembly withdrew it from thence at a period when the low price of public securities occasioned a serious loss. The withdrawal, as well as the investment, was managed by Franklin, under instructions from the Assembly. After Franklin's return to America, the House appointed a committee to examine his accounts, who "found the same to be just." The proprietor, Thomas Penn, wrote to the governor of Pennsylvania, "I think the Assembly made a very handsome allowance to Mr. Franklin, though short of his expenses; but what I most admire at is, that they have made an allowance for his loss in the stocks, which they had no power by law to do, and which ought to have been made good to the public by him and those members of the House that gave him directions to do it."

If it was a curious notion of the proprietor that



“those members,” meaning the majority of the Assembly, ought to have borne the loss suffered by the above transaction, there was at least some semblance of equity in the opinion. But Franklin’s political enemies, on a subsequent occasion, endeavored to throw obloquy upon him in a public and formal manner, for what it will easily be seen was no fault or error of his. The trust was an arduous one, and he fulfilled it to the hearty approval of his constituents. That some of these very men afterward endeavored to make political capital of so plain a transaction, is only one of the thousands of instances in which ardent partisans forget past acts and declarations to subserve a present purpose, and sacrifice truth and candor in the heat of party feeling.

Besides the evidences of private friendship to which we have referred, honorable testimony to the estimation in which Franklin was held was given in the appointment of his son, William Temple Franklin, governor of New Jersey. As there was nothing in the character and claims of the son to call the attention of the ministry to him, this appointment may be set down to the credit of the father. If it was intended as a bribe, or to purchase compliance, it certainly was not given in pursuance of any pledge or promise, implied or expressed, on the part of Dr. Franklin. Thomas Penn, in a letter to Governor Hamilton, expressed the belief that the appointment would make the father “more tractable,” as he “could not well oppose in Pennsylvania” what the son was instructed to do in New Jersey. But

Dr. Franklin remained the same sturdy patriot as ever. While the son became loyal in the hour of difficulty between the colonies and the mother country, his course, so far from influencing the father, procured the marked rebuke of the parent in that most emphatic of all acts, his last will and testament.

Dr. Franklin sailed from England in August, 1762, and arrived at Philadelphia on the first of November following. He left England with much pain at parting with the friends that his long stay had endeared to him. The following account of the incidents of his voyage, and of his reception at home, is extracted from a letter to Lord Kames, written three years afterward; and although it anticipates the narrative somewhat, we insert it, as resembling, in its easy, colloquial style, the Autobiography :

“ You require my history from the time I set sail for America. I left England about the end of August, 1762, in company with ten sail of merchant ships, under a convoy of a man-of-war. We had a pleasant passage to Madeira, where we were kindly received and entertained, our nation being then in high honor with the Portuguese, on account of the protection we were then affording them against the united invasions of France and Spain. It is a fertile island, and the different heights and situations among its mountains afford such temperaments of air, that all the fruits of northern and southern countries are produced there: corn, grapes, apples, peach-

es, oranges, lemons, plantains, bananas, &c. Here we furnished ourselves with fresh provisions, and refreshments of all kinds; and, after a few days, proceeded on our voyage, running southward until we got into the trade winds, and then with them westward, till we drew near the coast of America. The weather was so favorable that there were few days in which we could not visit from ship to ship, dining with each other, and on board of the man-of-war, which made the time pass agreeably, much more so than when one goes in a single ship; for this was like traveling in a moving village, with all one's neighbors about one.

“On the 1st of November I arrived safe and well at my own home, after an absence of near six years; found my wife and daughter well, the latter grown quite a woman, with many amiable accomplishments acquired in my absence; and my friends as hearty and affectionate as ever, with whom my house was filled for many days, to congratulate me on my return. I had been chosen yearly during my absence to represent the city of Philadelphia in our provincial Assembly, and, on my appearance in the House, they voted me three thousand pounds sterling for my services in England, and their thanks, delivered by the speaker. In February following my son arrived with my new daughter; for, with my consent and approbation, he married, soon after I left England, a very agreeable West India lady, with whom he is very happy. I accompanied him to his government, where he met with the kindest recep-



tion from the people of all ranks, and has lived with them ever since in the greatest harmony. A river only parts that province and ours, and his residence is within seventeen miles of me, so that we frequently see each other.

“In the spring of 1763 I set out on a tour through all the northern colonies to inspect and regulate the post-offices in the several provinces. In this journey I spent the summer, traveled about sixteen hundred miles, and did not get home till the beginning of November. The Assembly sitting through the following winter, and warm disputes arising between them and the governor, I became wholly engaged in public affairs; for, besides my duty as an Assemblyman, I had another trust to execute, that of being one of the commissioners appointed by law to dispose of the public money appropriated to the raising and paying an army to act against the Indians and defend the frontiers. And then, in December, we had two insurrections of the back inhabitants of our province, by whom twenty poor Indians were murdered, that had, from the first settlement of the province, lived among us, under the protection of our government. This gave me a good deal of employment; for, as the rioters threatened further mischief, and their actions seemed to be approved by an ever-acting party, I wrote a pamphlet entitled “*A Narrative, &c.*” (which I think I sent to you) to strengthen the hands of our weak government, by rendering the proceedings of the rioters unpopular and odious. This had a good effect; and afterward, when a great

body of them, with arms, marched toward the capital, in defiance of the government, with an avowed resolution to put to death one hundred and forty Indian converts then under its protection, I formed an association, at the governor's request, for his and their defense, we having no militia. Near one thousand of the citizens accordingly took arms; Governor Penn made my house for some time his headquarters, and did every thing by my advice, so that, for about forty-eight hours, I was a very great man, as I had been once some years before, in a time of public danger.

“But the fighting face we put on, and the reasonings we used with the insurgents (for I went, at the request of the governor and council, with three others, to meet and discourse with them), having turned them back and restored quiet to the city, I became a less man than ever; for I had, by this transaction, made myself many enemies among the populace; and the governor (with whose family our public disputes had long placed me in an unfriendly light, and the services I had lately rendered him not being of the kind that make a man acceptable), thinking it a favorable opportunity, joined the whole weight of the proprietary interest to get me out of the Assembly, which was accordingly effected at the last election by a majority of about twenty-five in four thousand voters. The House, however, when they met in October, approved of the resolutions taken, while I was speaker, of petitioning the crown for a change of government, and requested me to return to En-

glad to prosecute that petition ; which service I accordingly undertook, and embarked at the beginning of November last, being accompanied to the ship, sixteen miles, by a cavalcade of three hundred of my friends, who filled our sails with their good wishes, and I arrived in thirty days at London.

“ Here I have been ever since, engaged in that and other public affairs relating to America, which are like to continue some time longer upon my hands ; but I promise you, that when I am quit of these, I will engage in no other ; and that, as soon as I have recovered the ease and leisure I hope for, the task you require of me, of finishing my *Art of Virtue*, shall be performed. In the mean time, I must request you would excuse me on this consideration, that the powers of the mind are possessed by different men in different degrees, and that every one can not, like Lord Kames, intermix literary pursuits and important business without prejudice to either.”



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE letter of Dr. Franklin, with which our last chapter concludes, covers a long period. Returning to the thread of the narrative, we shall follow in detail the events which Franklin rapidly recounts, and supply the lesser incidents which his letter does not embrace.

His welcome home, as modestly intimated in the letter, was most cordial and hearty. Indeed, the various claims which he possessed upon the attention of his fellow-citizens would not permit it to be otherwise. His political friends asserted and defended their principles in honoring their champion. The philosophical and literary, who courted his friendship, were eager to hear what new advances he had made in their favorite pursuits, and to learn what discoveries and inventions he had to report, after his sojourn abroad. And his personal friends, and the many who follow the fashion of the hour in paying court to the distinguished, swelled the concourse who came to offer their congratulations. To a man like Franklin, by no means insensible to the good opinion of his fellow-citizens, this reception was highly gratifying.

During his absence in England he had retained his seat in the Assembly by annual election, than

which no stronger proof of the estimate of his services abroad could have been given by his constituents; and upon the meeting of the Assembly, besides the approval of his accounts, already mentioned, the thanks of the House were voted to him, as well for his faithful discharge of his duty to Pennsylvania in particular, as for the many and important services rendered to America in general, during his residence in Great Britain. As appears from the Journal of the House, the resolve of the Legislature was carried into effect on the 31st of March, 1763, and the thanks of the House were given to Dr. Franklin in form by the speaker. The reply was brief but happy: "That he was thankful to the House for the very handsome and generous allowance they had been pleased to make him for his services, but that the approbation of the House was, in his estimation, far above every other kind of recompense."

Dr. Franklin was now in his fifty-eighth year; but the most active portion of his life in public duties remained to him. He held the office of post-master-general in the colonies, and undertook and accomplished what was at that day a great journey. He traveled in a light carriage, driven by himself, through the colonies north of Philadelphia, on a tour of inspection among the post-offices, journeying as far as New Hampshire. The trip, with his delays and detentions, occupied five months, and the distance traveled was about sixteen hundred miles. In the course of the journey he had two falls, by one

of which his shoulder was dislocated ; and he was afflicted, also, with a weakness and pain in the breast, which compelled him to make slow progress. Accompanying the wagon was a saddle-horse, on which



his daughter Sally, who was his fellow-traveler, occasionally rode. On their return, practice having made her expert, she rode in this way nearly all the distance from Rhode Island to Philadelphia. During this journey he experienced those proofs of official and of private hospitality to which his public character, and large circle of private friends and connections opened the way. Though fully appreciating the kindness of his entertainers, he has left on record a humorist's idea of the difficulties of hospitality. In a letter to his sister after his return to Philadelphia, he says, "I am very happy in being at home, where I am allowed to know when I have ate enough and drank enough, and sit in a



place that I like, and nobody pretends to know what I feel better than myself."

At this period occurred events marking the inexpediency, to use no harsher term, of letting loose the savage propensities of Indians, under the protection of white allies. The English and French, who had each employed the savages in their wars against each other, had now returned to peace; but the evil passions of the Indians, inflamed in a warfare in which they had little other interest than hatred against all pale-faces, were not so easily to be calmed by European diplomacy. They had their own motives for embarking in the war—motives and impulses which were not removed by the declaration of peace. Nor was their pride at all consulted in a treaty in which they had no share, and from the conditions of which they received no advantage while, on the other hand, their fierce propensities were disappointed, and the plunder and carnage in which they delighted were ordered to be stayed. Having had a taste of blood, they were not satisfied to desist when their civilized friends cried enough; nor were they sufficient adepts in sophistry to understand why, while on one day it was loyal and proper for them to use the tomahawk, scalping-knife, and brand, on the next the heroism of the red brothers became the barbarity of fierce Indians. So they settled the question of casuistry in their own way, by commencing a war of plunder and murder on the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania on their own account. The Assembly of Pennsylvania imme-

diately passed acts to raise money and military forces, and to appoint commissioners to expend the funds which were levied for the purposes of defense. As the reader is ready to suppose, Franklin's prudence and integrity secured his appointment as one of these commissioners.

During the winter of 1763-4, Indian difficulties of a most unexpected character put all the wisdom and strength of the colonial government in requisition. The frontier settlers in Donegal, Paxton, and other townships, had long been on no very friendly terms with the Indians, and the alarms of the late war had tended to increase this feeling of aversion. It is a common characteristic of feuds between races, that the enemies include all of the hated class in their displeasure, and behind the broad line of nation, color, or class, will recognize no distinction of friend or foe. The "Paxton Boys" denounced all Indians as enemies, a disposition in which they were not singular. In the early criminal records of Pennsylvania is the account of the trial and execution of a man for the murder of two Indians under these circumstances: Having heard that an Indian foray was apprehended, and being crazy with fright, he rushed from his house and killed the first two red men he met. That these men happened to be friends did not help their case at all; they were Indians, and that was enough.

In a similar manner the Paxton settlers reasoned. Excited by rumors of Indian hostilities, or, perhaps, improving this pretext to gratify their own desire for

murder, these turbulent spirits doomed to destruction a settlement of friendly Indians on the Conestoga manor. These Indians were a remnant of a tribe of the Six Nations, who entered into a treaty with William Penn, had frequently renewed it with successive governors, and, while the settlements of the whites hemmed them in, had still continued to live in peace and friendship with their neighbors. Their chief, Shehocs, was present and assisting at the second treaty made by the Indians of his tribe with William Penn in 1701.

Upon this settlement, which had dwindled down to twenty persons, an attack was made on the morning of the 14th of December, 1763, by a party of fifty-seven men, who broke into their cabins at daylight, and slew the defenseless tenants in their beds. Only five were found at home, three women, two men, one of whom was Shehocs, and a little boy. These were butchered in their beds, or as they sprang from them; and the murderers, as if challenging the deepest abhorrence of all the merciful and just, scalped and mutilated the bodies of their victims. The Indians had not been without warning of the intended attack; but Shehocs scouted such a thing as impossible. He might, he said, be in peril from the Indians, who hated him for his friendship for the whites, but "the English will wrap me in their watchcoat, and save me from all danger."

The immediate neighbors of these poor sufferers, who had known them best, were horror-struck at this fiendish act. The magistrates of Lancaster, for



the protection of the remainder, caused them to be brought into that town, and placed for safe keeping in the workhouse, a strong block building. The governor issued his proclamation enjoining upon all liege subjects to make diligent search after the authors and perpetrators of the crime. But, notwithstanding these measures of the government, and the horror expressed by the good among the people, the murderers were not deterred from the completion of their work. On the 27th of December, fifty of the bandits, armed as before, suddenly appeared in Lancaster. They forced the door of the work-house. "When," says Franklin, in his account of the massacre, "the poor wretches saw they had no protection nigh, nor could possibly escape, and being without the least weapon for defense, they divided into their little families, the children clinging to their parents. They fell on their knees, protested their innocence, declared their love to the English, and that, in their whole lives, they had never done them injury; and in this posture they all received the hatchet. Men, women, and little children were every one inhumanly murdered in cold blood! The barbarous men who committed the atrocious act, in defiance of government, and of all laws human and divine, and to the eternal disgrace of their country and color, then mounted their horses, huzzaed in triumph, as if they had gained a victory, and rode off *unmolested!*"

The perpetrators of this cruel act all escaped legal punishment. No proceedings were ever attempt-

ed against them. But Watson, in his *Annals*, states that Mr. Wright, an aged member of the Assembly from Columbia, was accustomed to say that he knew and had survived nearly the whole of them; and that they generally came to untimely deaths, or closed their lives in suffering and distress. Their punishment was thus made to resemble that of the first murderer—a guilty conscience who can bear? And yet these persons had not merely apologists, but defenders; and so large a party in the province approved these outrages, that the arm of government was powerless in the effort to punish, and had quite enough to do in protecting the remaining friendly Christian Indians from a like destruction.

These Indians, to the number of one hundred and forty, came, under the advice of their Moravian teachers, to Philadelphia. They were put on Province Island for security, thence removed to League Island, and thence, under convoy of the Royal Highlanders, who volunteered for the service, they started for New York, but returned to Philadelphia, and were placed in the barracks, still under the protection of the Highlanders. The troops of the province were posted on the frontiers. These removals were not made through caprice or uncertainty, but were considered necessary, as fears were entertained from some of the excited citizens of Philadelphia, who were known to favor the insurgents. Meanwhile, those insurgents showed a determination to prosecute their purposes. They advanced as far as Germantown, now augmented in number to several

hundreds, armed with rifles, clad in hunting-shirts, and shouting and threatening in all the license which association for an evil purpose confers upon the violent, when they feel sure of impunity from their own numbers, and from the sympathy or indecision of those among the public who have neither courage to resist nor boldness openly to countenance.

In this crisis the influence of Franklin was eminently serviceable. Under his direction a military association was organized, and nearly a thousand citizens, including many young members of the Society of Friends, enrolled themselves. The barracks were further strengthened by intrenchments, and the friends of order and of mercy were resolved to defend to the last the poor Indians who had thrown themselves upon Philadelphia for protection. The insurgents, in view of these formidable preparations, paused. Advantage was taken of their hesitation to send a committee, one of whom was Dr. Franklin, to meet and confer with the rioters. As they alleged that the Indians had been guilty of outrages which they were in arms to avenge, it was proposed to the leaders to come in and identify the offenders for trial and punishment. Some of the principal of the rioters accordingly visited the barracks with Dr. Franklin, but could identify none of the Indians as those of whom they professed to be in search. They saw, moreover, what a reception was in preparation for them if they persisted, and, affecting to be satisfied that those they sought were not among the Indians in the barracks, returned to



their companions, and the formidable danger passed over, the insurgents departing for their homes.

The address of Dr. Franklin, remarkable in the mode in which he managed this conference, is no less observable in a "Narrative" which he drew up "of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County, *by persons unknown*." Through the whole paper, though the murders are described with most simple yet touching pathos, and though the unknown murderers are denounced with righteous indignation, there is a careful avoidance of any thing like an attempt to fix the crime on particular persons. To answer such an appeal was to identify the answerer with the murderers in feeling; to take umbrage at it was to confess participation. This pamphlet is further remarkable for its indignant expostulations, rising often into elevated and eloquent language, being more like a popular harangue than was Franklin's wont. But it bears, notwithstanding, all the impress of his mind in its calm reasoning, perspicuous statement of facts, and judicious citation of instances and examples.

The insurgent party memorialized the governor in behalf of the frontier settlers. In this address was displayed much talent and ingenuity; and the distresses which the frontiers had suffered from the Indians, the instances of whole defenseless families murdered by them, and other tragic events and particulars, were displayed to enlist the popular feeling, while professing to address the government. Another memorial from fifteen hundred persons, not identified so closely as the others with the rioters,

was sent to the Assembly. The press teemed with publications defending the conduct of the Paxton Boys; and the Bible even was wrested to make the course they had taken appear laudable rather than reprehensible. The Indians were classed as heathen, and the command to the children of Israel to destroy the idolaters in Canaan was cited as binding upon the colonists in America. Thirty years before, certain frontier settlers had attempted by force to dispossess the Indians of lands which had been guaranteed to them by treaty, alleging, as stated by James Logan (quoted by Watson), "that it was against the laws of God and nature that so much land should be idle while so many Christians wanted it to labor on." With envy and covetousness for interpreters, the unlearned and unstable do indeed "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction."

In no part of his life did Franklin rise so superior to his habitual deference to expediency, and in none did he show more moral courage and firmness than at this crisis. The fact that the government found itself too weak to prosecute this heinous offense, and that thus the factious were allowed a virtual triumph, is evidence sufficient of the strength of the faction which Franklin so boldly opposed. But, as mentioned in his letter to Lord Kames, a stronger popular rebuke was in preparation for him, to be followed, however, by a signal triumph.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE necessary preparations for defense against the Indians had not been carried in the Assembly without a revival of the old disputes between the proprietaries and the representatives of the people. A militia bill had been lost because the governor would not sign it without amendments giving him the sole appointment of officers, trebling the fines, and making all offenses punishable by sentence of courts martial, thus putting almost absolute power into the hands of the proprietary governor. In its original features the bill conceded quite enough to that functionary; in its amended shape it was intolerable. Franklin was conspicuous in his opposition in the House, and appeared, also, before the public with one of his plain and convincing papers upon the subject. The act providing for the raising of money to defend the colony had been passed only by a sacrifice of the principle which Franklin had so successfully defended in England, to wit, that the estates of the proprietaries should be liable to the same taxation with other property. Governor John Penn gave his own construction to the following clause of the decision of the king in council: "The located uncultivated lands of the proprietaries shall not be assessed higher than the lowest rate at which any located uncultivated lands belonging to the inhabi-



tants shall be assessed." Governor Penn determined this to mean that the best land of the proprietaries should not be taxed higher than the poorest belonging to the people. The Assembly, on the other hand, contended that the decision meant that the proprietaries' land should be taxed no higher than the lowest rate at which land of the same quality belonging to the people was assessed. Meanwhile the emergency was pressing. The Indians were invading the borders; the public mind was in the highest state of excitement and exasperation; and the Assembly was compelled to yield to the ungenerous advantage which Governor Penn took of the public danger. The act was passed, with the objectionable feature of discrimination between the Penn domains and the property of the citizens.

But the patience of the Assembly was exhausted. They passed a series of resolutions detailing their difficulties with the "proprietors' deputy, or governor," as Franklin liked to term that officer, and expressing their belief that harmony could not be restored until the government of the province was vested directly in the crown. Not caring hastily to assume the responsibility of such an act as a petition to the crown, praying the desired change, they adjourned for the purpose of advising with their constituents. After seven weeks' recess, they reassembled, on the 14th of May, 1764, and brought with them petitions signed by three thousand of their fellow-citizens, praying the king to assume the government of the province.

In the interim Franklin had not been idle. He had prepared and published, in the form of a letter to a friend in the country, a tract entitled "Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of Our Public Affairs." In this he showed that Pennsylvania was not the only colony in which there had been disputes between the proprietaries and the people, but that such disputes formed an unavoidable fault of the system; and that the only remedy was in the proposed change, not of *government*, but of *governor*; for the laws would still remain the same. "His majesty, who has no views but for the good of the people, will thenceforth appoint the governor, who, unshackled by proprietary instructions, will be at liberty to join with the Assembly in enacting wholesome laws. At present, when the king requires supplies of his faithful subjects, and they are willing and desirous to grant them, the proprietaries intervene and say, 'unless our private interests in other particulars are served, *nothing shall be done.*' This insolent tribunitial veto has long encumbered all our public affairs, and been productive of many mischiefs." If the preceding quotation seems somewhat like a warm expression of "Cool Thoughts," the conclusion of the letter is still more pungent: "On the whole, I can not but think, the more the proposal is considered of our humble petition to the king to take this province under his majesty's immediate protection and government, the more unanimously we shall go into it. We are chiefly people of three countries. British spirits can no longer bear the treatment they have

received, nor will they put on the chains prepared for them by a fellow-subject; and the Irish and Germans have felt too severely the oppressions of hard-hearted landlords and arbitrary princes to wish to see in the proprietaries of Pennsylvania the one and the other united."

A good portion of the paper was made up of facts in the history of other colonies, which had changed a proprietary government for a governor appointed by the crown, exhibiting the advantages which had accrued to them by such a measure. Objections were ably answered, and the benefits of the proposed change strongly set forth. The disadvantages under which the province labored were shown to have existed from its beginning. "Pennsylvania had scarce been settled twenty years when these disputes began between the first proprietor and the original settlers; they continued, with some intermissions, during his whole life; the widow took them up, and continued them after his death. Her sons resumed them very early, and they still subsist." As a consequence of these disputes, the paper goes on to say, "the people are discontented, and grow turbulent;" and the recent difficulties with the Paxton Boys are thus alluded to:

"At present we are in a wretched situation. The government, that ought to keep all in order, is itself weak, and has scarce authority enough to keep the common peace. Mobs assemble and kill (we scarce dare say murder) numbers of innocent people in cold blood, who were under the protection of the



government. Proclamations are issued to bring the rioters to justice. Those proclamations are treated with the utmost indignity and contempt. Not a magistrate dares wag a finger toward discovering and apprehending the delinquents (we must not call them *murderers*). They assemble again, and with arms in their hands approach the capital. The government truckles, condescends to cajole them, and drops all prosecution of their crimes; while honest citizens, threatened in their lives and fortunes, flee the province, as having no confidence in the public protection. We are daily threatened with more of these tumults; and the government which, in its distress, called aloud on the sober inhabitants to come with arms to its assistance, now sees those who afforded that assistance daily libeled, abused, and menaced by its partisans for so doing; whence it has little reason to expect such assistance on another occasion."

On the assembling of the House, the members, after consultation with their constituents, having received no intimation that the measure was unacceptable to the people, determined upon a petition to the crown. It is here to be noted that the petition offered from three thousand persons, though among the evidence on which the Assembly acted, formed only a portion of it. On the other side only one petition was presented, and that had but forty signatures. But, though the measure was carried by a large majority, it was not effected without a long and earnest debate. Among the speeches on the

part of the proprietary party, that of John Dickinson was the most able; and the friends of the proprietaries caused its publication in a pamphlet, with a preface purporting to supply to the people what was supposed to be familiar to the representatives, and was therefore unnecessary in the speech, as addressed to the House. This was answered on the other side by the publication of the speech of Galloway, a leader of the popular party, and to this speech Franklin prefixed a preface. In this he skillfully and adroitly answered the preface to Dickinson's speech, and treated the subject with most caustic irony and sarcasm; while, as usual, his array of facts, and his exposure of sophistry and misrepresentation, made his production tell with the greatest effect upon the public. It would occupy too much space to make extracts which would at this day require much collateral information to show their point; but there is one passage which we copy as pertinent to our present narrative. The proprietary party had prepared a petition praying that the petition of the Assembly be "wholly disregarded," and, in commenting upon this document, Franklin says:

"The petition proceeds to assure his majesty 'that this province (except from Indian savages) enjoys the *most perfect tranquillity*.' Amazing! What! the most perfect tranquillity, when there have been three atrocious riots within a few months! When, in two of them, horrid murders were committed on twenty innocent persons, and, in the third, no less than one hundred and forty like murders

were meditated, and declared to be intended, with as many more as should be occasioned by any opposition! When we know that these rioters and murderers have none of them been punished, have never been prosecuted, have not even been apprehended; when we are frequently told that they intend still to execute their purposes as soon as the protection of the king's forces is withdrawn! Is our tranquillity more perfect now than it was between the first riot and the second, or between the second and the third? And why except 'the Indian savages,' if a little intermission is to be denominated 'the most perfect tranquillity?' for the Indians themselves have been quiet lately. Almost as well might the ships in an engagement talk of 'the most perfect tranquillity' between two broadsides. But 'a spirit of riot and bloodshed is foreign to the general temper of the inhabitants.' I hope and believe it is; the Assembly have said nothing to the contrary. And yet, is there not too much of it? Are there not pamphlets continually written, and daily sold in our streets, to justify and encourage it? Are not the mad, armed mob in those writings instigated to imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-citizens, by first applauding their murder of the Indians, and then representing the Assembly and their friends as worse than Indians—as having privately stirred up the Indians to murder the white people, and armed and rewarded them for the purpose? *Lies*, gentlemen, villainous as ever the malice of hell invented, and which, to do you justice, not one of you believes, though you would have the mob believe them."



The petition to the king, adopted by the Assembly, was drafted by Dr. Franklin, and was in the words and form following:

"TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY, IN  
COUNCIL.

"The Petition of the Representatives of the Freemen of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, most humbly sheweth:

"That the government of this province by proprietaries has by long experience been found inconvenient, attended by many difficulties and obstructions to your majesty's service, arising from the intervention of proprietary private interests in public affairs, and disputes concerning those interests.

"That the said proprietary government is weak, unable to support its own authority, and maintain the common internal peace of the province; great riots have lately arisen therein, armed mobs marching from place to place, and committing violent outrages and insults on the government with impunity, to the great terror of your majesty's subjects. And these evils are not likely to receive any remedy here, the continual disputes between the proprietaries and the people, and their mutual jealousies and dislikes preventing.

"We do, therefore, most humbly pray that your majesty would be graciously pleased to resume the government of this province, making such compensation to the proprietaries for the same as to your majesty's wisdom and goodness shall appear just and

equitable, and permitting your dutiful subjects therein to enjoy, under your majesty's more immediate care and protection, the privileges that have been granted to them by and under your royal predecessors.

“By order of the House.”

When this petition was adopted, the speaker, Mr. Norris, shrunk from the responsibility of signing it, and resigned his seat. In the “preface” before quoted, Franklin thus speaks of this event: “I mention it for the comfort of *old sinners*, that in politics, as well as in religion, repentance and amendment, though late, shall obtain forgiveness and procure favor. Witness the late speaker, Mr. Norris; a steady and constant opposer of all the proprietary encroachments, and whom, for thirty years past, they have been continually abusing, allowing him no one virtue or good quality whatsoever; and now, as he showed some unwillingness to engage in this present application to the crown, he is become all at once the ‘faithful servant!’” In place of Mr. Norris, Franklin was elected speaker, and as such signed the petition, his *first* official act in that capacity. Mr. Dickinson was another who had opposed the proprietary measures, though he acted with that party in the matter of opposing the petition. Franklin cites his case as encouragement for *young sinners*. “Though long hated by some, and disregarded by others of the proprietary faction, he is at once, for the same reason as in Mr. Norris’s case, become a sage in the law, and

an oracle in matters relating to our Constitution. I would only advise him carefully to preserve these the panegyrics with which they have adorned him ; in time they may serve to console him by balancing the calumny they shall load him with, when he does not go through with them in all their measures."

The majority in the Assembly were not disposed to proceed without circumspection. One of the arguments against the proposed change of the government of the province was, that in surrendering the proprietary charter, they would forfeit the peculiar privileges which Penn conferred, and put it in the power of the ministry, in reframing the government, to abridge their freedom. Their agent in London was therefore vested with discretionary powers, and instructed so to proceed as not to put the privileges of the colonists in jeopardy, delaying the presentation of the petition, should such delay seem expedient, until he received further instructions from the Assembly.

In the next session of the Assembly came up the important subject of the stamp duties. The Assembly of Pennsylvania, like the other legislative bodies in the colonies, and in common with the universal sentiment of the thinking portion of the American people, saw in the proposal of the British ministry to raise revenue in such a mode, the assertion of a principle the maintenance of which would "deprive the people of their most essential rights as British subjects." We shall have occasion, in recording Franklin's examination before the House of Commons, to



state the grounds upon which he, with other American patriots whom he most ably represented, opposed this encroachment. The agent of Pennsylvania in England was instructed to remonstrate; and signing these instructions as speaker was the last act of Dr. Franklin in that capacity. It is somewhat remarkable that his first act and his last as speaker of the House should thus have been connected with matters of so much public moment and interest.

It is too often the case, in events which depend upon the verdict of men, under all forms of government, and whether that verdict be rendered by many or few, that a man's best acts are those by which he is overthrown and supplanted. In the election of members to the Legislature in 1764, the proprietary party strained every nerve to defeat Dr. Franklin, and succeeded. But it was by the scanty majority of about twenty-five votes in four thousand. Simply as the opponent of proprietary measures, he could not probably have been defeated; but his movements relative to the Paxton riots, and the unreserved manner in which he spoke of the turbulent party, specimens of which we have given, were adroitly made to turn against him. Whoever has lived through, or witnessed a popular excitement, in which the heat of passion has led to the commission of wrong and of error, has noticed that whatever restitution may be afterward made to the bold champion of right and of justice, he is often made to suffer for his freedom, even by the indifference, if not the declared opposition, of those who can not but commend his course

in the abstract. So it fared with Franklin ; but, although the proprietaries managed, by the aid of those stung with his rebukes, to defeat his election, for the first time in fourteen years, it was a defeat which preluded his most brilliant successes, and introduced him into a wider sphere of action and broader field of usefulness than his friends or himself had at all dreamed of or imagined possible, inasmuch as his future acts depended upon events then entirely unanticipated. It was found, upon the meeting of the Assembly, that after all the strenuous effort which had been made by the proprietary party, full two thirds approved of the measures of the late Assembly. As a rebuke to those who had opposed Franklin, no less than as an endorsement of the policy of their predecessors, the Assembly appointed the rejected candidate a special agent to proceed to Great Britain, and there take in charge the petition of the Legislature and such other affairs of the province as required the services of an agent.

Though Franklin was appointed by a large majority the agent of Pennsylvania in England, the opponents of the measure did not suffer the vote to pass without ardent opposition. Mr. Sparks, in a note to the Writings of Franklin, has preserved an extract from a speech of John Dickinson, which, in its terrific prophecies, now seems quite amusing. "Why," said the orator, "should a majority of this House single out from the whole world the man most obnoxious to his country to represent his country, though he was at the last election turned out of

the Assembly, where he had sat for fourteen years? Why should they exert their power in the most disgusting manner, and throw pain, and terror, and displeasure into the breasts of their fellow-citizens? Excusable indeed would be their choice if all wisdom and virtue were lodged in his head and heart. But it is not pretended that there are not many men in Great Britain qualified and willing to defend the interests of Pennsylvania. Unhappy Pennsylvania! whose peace must be sacrificed to private connections. Since the zeal of his friends will not suffer them to regard her tranquillity, more worthy of the trust intended him would he appear in the eyes of many good men should he voluntarily decline an office which he can not accept without alarming, offending, and disturbing his country."

After citing various instances from antiquity of patriots who surrendered office and honor for their country's good, the speaker proceeded in a strain even more energetically deprecatory than before. "The gentleman proposed has been called here to-day 'a great luminary of the learned world.' I acknowledge his abilities. Far be it from me to detract from the merit I admire. Let him still shine, but without wrapping his country in flames. Let him, from a private station, from a smaller sphere, diffuse, as I think he may, a beneficial light; but let him not be made to move and blaze like a comet, to terrify and to distress."

The force of hyperbole certainly could no further go than this. As the orator and his subject after-



ward, in times of peril, acted together, and as their friendship does not appear to have been broken by these temporary political jarrings, we may imagine them making quite merry over these terrible vaticinations and "chimeras dire." But his opponents did not stop at speeches. They prepared a protest against the appointment; but the House refused to receive it, pronouncing it unparliamentary. Among the charges in this document was one relative to the application of certain moneys, which we have already spoken of in another connection. Franklin answered the protest as he was on the point of sailing; and the publication of his enemies gave him an opportunity thus to write an able vindication of himself, to make a graceful farewell to his friends, to give the proprietary party another severe review, and to allude again in strong terms to the proceedings of the rioters, to whom he seemed disposed to give no quarter.

Whatever opposition to Franklin patriots were led into by the doubtful circumstances of the times, all was removed by the events of his sojourn in England. Dr. William Smith, the provost of the Philadelphia College, some years after wrote: "Under whatever circumstances this second mission was undertaken, it appears to have been a measure preordained of Heaven; and it will be forever remembered to the honor of Pennsylvania, that the agent selected to assert and defend the rights of a single province at the court of Great Britain, became the bold assertor of the rights of America in general, and,

beholding the fetters that were forging for her, conceived the magnanimous thought of rending them asunder before they could be riveted."

On the 7th of November, in less than a fortnight after his appointment, Franklin embarked at Chester



for England. A cavalcade of three hundred of his friends attended him to that place, where a most affectionate leave was taken of him. The expenses of his agency the merchants of Philadelphia subscribed, as a loan, to be reimbursed by the next Assembly; and all the efforts which had been made to oppose and to injure, served but to give his departure the air of a triumph, and to assure him of the unabated confidence of those who knew him best, and of all people except those in the interest of the proprietaries, or in sympathy from mistaken views with the malcontents.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE attachment of Benjamin Franklin to his family and friends, and the efforts he continually made to serve them, by imparting advice, the result of his experience, often appears in his correspondence. A letter, written to his daughter on the eve of his departure for England, though often quoted, and, perhaps, already familiar to our readers, deserves a place here, not only on account of its intrinsic value as advice, applicable now as then, but as displaying the apprehensions which he felt lest the misrepresentations of his enemies should wound the feelings of his family. In his letters to his wife we observe similar evidences of the extreme sensitiveness of Franklin in this respect. In a letter to Mrs. Franklin, he says: "I am concerned that so much trouble should be given you by idle reports concerning me. Be satisfied, my dear, that while I retain my senses, and God vouchsafes me his protection, I shall do nothing unworthy the character of an honest man, and *one who loves his family*." In another letter, sealed with a device representing a dove standing on a coiled serpent, with the motto *Innocence surmont tout*, he says: "Let no one make you uneasy with their idle or malicious scribblings, but enjoy yourself and friends, and the comforts of life that God has bestowed on



you, with a cheerful heart. I am glad these pamphlets give you so little concern. I make no other answer to them at present than what appears on the seal of this letter." These extracts offer a much better key to the real sensitiveness of Franklin than the tone taken in letters to his associates, out of his own household, on the same subject. He writes to an old member of the "Junto :—" "I find that expressions of steady, continued friendship, such as are contained in your letter, though but from one or a few honest and sensible men, who have long known us, afford a satisfaction that far outweighs the clamorous abuse of a thousand knaves and fools. While I enjoy the share that I have so long had in the esteem of my old friends, the bird-and-beast people you mention may peck, and snarl, and bark at me as much as they think proper. There is only some danger that I should grow too vain on their disapprobation." In this extract there is an evidently assumed tone of bravado, which does not conceal the soreness which every upright man must feel at abuse, however much he may affect to disregard it, and however near he may come to persuading even himself that he is indifferent to what is said of him. The letter to his daughter above referred to is as follows:

"My dear child, the natural prudence and goodness of heart God has blessed you with make it less necessary for me to be particular in giving you advice. I shall, therefore, only say, that the more attentively dutiful and tender you are toward your

good mamma, the more you will recommend yourself to me. But why should I mention *me*, when you have so much higher a promise in the commandments, that such conduct will recommend you to the favor of God? You know I have many enemies, all, indeed, on the public account (for I can not recollect that I have in a private capacity given just cause of offense to any one whatever), yet they are enemies, and very bitter ones; and you must expect their enmity will extend in some degree to you, so that your slightest indiscretions will be magnified into crimes, in order the more sensibly to wound and afflict me. It is, therefore, the more necessary for you to be extremely circumspect in all your behavior, that no advantage may be given to their malevolence.

“Go constantly to church, whoever preaches. The act of devotion in the Common Prayer Book is your principal business there, and, if properly attended to, will do more toward amending your heart than sermons generally can do; for they were composed by men of much greater piety and wisdom than our common composers of sermons can pretend to be; and, therefore, I wish you would never miss the prayer days; yet I do not mean you should despise sermons, even of the preachers you dislike, for the discourse is often much better than the man, as sweet and clear waters come through very dirty earth. I am the more particular on this head, as you seemed to express, a little before I came away, some inclination to leave our Church, which I would not have you do.

“For the rest, I would only recommend to you, in my absence, to acquire those useful accomplishments, arithmetic and book-keeping. This you might do with ease if you would resolve not to see company on the hours you set apart for those studies.

“We expect to be at sea to-morrow, if this wind holds, after which I shall have no opportunity of writing to you till I arrive (if it please God I do arrive) in England. I pray that his blessing may attend you, which is worth more than a thousand of mine, though they are never wanting. Give my love to your brother and sister, as I can not write to them, and remember me affectionately to the young ladies your friends, and to our good neighbors. I am, my dear child, your affectionate father,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

“Our church,” referred to in the foregoing letter, probably referred to Christ Church, of the vestry of which Franklin was for some time a member. In connection with this fact, an anecdote is related, which is in perfect keeping with the character of the doctor for sagacity. The project of the erection of another church edifice in the city was in agitation, and there were some members of the vestry who conscientiously opposed it, in the fear that the division of the congregation would too much weaken the old church. But Franklin defended the new enterprise; and, to show that no permanent diminution, but rather a solid increase, was to be expected from the measure, quoted the habit of the bees, of swarm-



ing, by which, he said, the comfort and prosperity of the old hive was increased, and a new and flour-



ishing colony established, to keep the parent stock in countenance.

Franklin reached Portsmouth on the 9th of December, 1764, the passage being made in thirty days from land to land. He wrote to his wife, advising her of his safe arrival, before leaving the vessel; and on the next evening was at his old quarters in the Strand, where his appearance in her parlor was no small astonishment to his old friend, Mrs. Stevenson. The news of his safe arrival, when received in Philadelphia, was made the occasion of an impromptu rejoicing. The bells were rung, and his personal and political friends met to exchange congratulations, and celebrate, in festivity, an event which would certainly not have received so much honor had it

not been for the efforts which Franklin's enemies had made to destroy him.

The business of his mission, the presentation and defense of the petition for a change of government, received Franklin's early attention. He labored in the premises with such success, that there seemed little doubt of the final accomplishment of a change which was quite as agreeable to the crown and ministry as to the people of Pennsylvania, inasmuch as it promised to remove a source of continual trouble and perplexity in the administration of the affairs of the colony, and to enlarge the authority of the crown, while it simplified the operations of government. But the increasing difficulties in the American colonies, arising from the passage of the Stamp Act, and other measures of a kindred tendency, which were discussed or attempted, withdrew attention from the affairs of Pennsylvania and its proprietaries. The province which Franklin represented came to be considered as one only of a league of rebellious colonies. The business in which he acted had more than the local interest of a single province, and he was, in fact, the representative and agent of the whole, long before he became so in form.

Among the subjects in which Pennsylvania had a common interest with the other colonies, was the legislation of the British Parliament upon the subject of emissions of paper money in the colonies. The British merchants, finding a difficulty in the collection of their debts in the provinces, ascribed as the cause, or as one cause, the depreciation of the

local currencies, and procured the passage of an act restraining the issue of paper in the colonies, coupled with a clause making it a legal tender. Dr. Franklin was charged with a petition from the Assembly praying a repeal of this act. All was in a fair way of success, when he found it necessary and prudent to hesitate. In the discussion of the subject, the mode of issuing paper in Pennsylvania had come before the ministry, and upon the hints afforded by Pennsylvania financiering, a scheme was concocted much more obnoxious than the "Restraining Act." The new plan involved the principles of the Stamp Act, and, in effect, asserted the right of Parliament to tax the unrepresented colonies. In Pennsylvania, the custom of issuing money had been as follows: It was made redeemable in a stated number of years, usually ten. When issued, it was loaned, bearing interest, to individuals, upon sufficient security, and repaid to the government in instalments, so that at the end of the term the whole sum was paid up. The community had thus the benefit of the circulation; the money was kept at par, or nearly so; and the colony derived an income from the interest on the issues.

The plan of the ministry in England was to issue paper money for the colonies on the credit of the British government, and send it to America to be loaned in the same manner that the government of Pennsylvania had done, thus drawing from the colonies a tax in the shape of the interest, which would, of course, be paid into the British treasury. In



view of these consequences, Franklin deemed it advisable to forbear the pressing of the petition for the Restraining Act.

Franklin found, on this visit to England, the nation more busy with the affairs of America than ever. No topics of such paramount European importance as on his first visit engaged the public mind. He complains that he could not understand *Parliamentary prerogative*. The royal prerogative was more intelligible, inasmuch as by birth subjects admitted allegiance to the king; but as the power of Parliament is based on representation, it was difficult to understand the precise claims of that body over unrepresented colonies. He complained, also, in a letter to Lord Kames, of the disposition of the people. "Every man in England," he says, "seems to consider himself as a piece of a sovereign over America; seems to jostle himself into the throne with the king, and talks of *our subjects in the colonies*." The newspapers were full of speculations and reports relative to America, particularly as financial and business matters produced no small share of the discussion. Franklin all his life, both from the natural activity of his mind, and from early association with the press, kept his eye on its issues. As he never forgot his capacity to write, or, as he says in his biography, the advantages of "having learned a little to scribble," he made numberless contributions to the journals, which are now lost. He was indefatigable. The following is an extract from a paper written for a London publication, and transcribed from the origi-

nal draft in Sparks's Collection of Franklin's Works. The object needs no explanation, as the palpable aim of the writer is to ridicule newspaper "We hears" and *on dits*.

"The very tails of the American sheep are so laden with wool, that each has a car or wagon, on four little wheels, to support and keep it from trailing on the ground. Would they calk their ships, would they even litter their horses with wool, if it were not both plenty and cheap? And what signifies the dearness of labor, where an English shilling passes for five-and-twenty? Their engaging three hundred silk throwsters here in one week for New York was treated as a fable, because, forsooth, they have 'no silk there to throw.' Those who make this objection, perhaps, do not know that, at the same time, the agents from the King of Spain were at Quebec to contract for one thousand pieces of cannon to be made there for the fortification of Mexico, and at New York engaging the usual supply of woollen floor-carpets for their West India houses; other agents from the Emperor of China were at Boston, treating about an exchange of raw silk for wool, to be carried in Chinese junks through the Straits of Magellan.

"And yet all this is as certainly true as the account, said to be from Quebec, in all the papers of last week, that the inhabitants of Canada are making preparations for a cod and whale fishery this summer upon the Upper Lakes.' Ignorant people may object that the Upper Lakes are fresh, and that cod and whales are salt water fish; but let them know,

sir, that cod, like other fish, when attacked by their enemies, fly into any water where they can be safest; that whales, when they have a mind to eat cod, pursue them wherever they fly; and that the grand leap of the whale, in the chase up the Falls of Niagara, is esteemed, by all who have seen it, as one of the finest spectacles in nature. Really, sir, the world is grown too incredulous. It is like the pendulum, ever swinging from one extreme to another. Formerly, every thing printed was believed, because it was in print. Now, things seem to be disbelieved for just the same reason. Wise men wonder at the present growth of infidelity. They should have considered, when they taught people to doubt the authority of newspapers, and the truth of predictions in the almanacs, that the next step might be a disbelief of the well-vouched accounts of ghosts and witches.

“Thus much I thought it necessary to say in favor of an honest set of writers, whose comfortable living depends on collecting and supplying the printers with news at the small price of sixpence an article, and who always show their regard to truth by contradicting, in a subsequent article, such as are wrong—for another sixpence—to the great satisfaction and improvement of us coffee-house students in history and politics, and all future Livys, Rapins, Robertsons, Humes, and Macauleys who may be sincerely inclined to furnish the world with that *rara avis*, a true history.”

On the 22d of March, 1765, the famous Stamp Act was passed, notwithstanding the earnest remon-



stances of the colonists by petition and address. Dr. Franklin, as will readily be inferred from his patriotic character and from his indefatigable industry, used every means in his power to oppose it. But, to quote his own words, "The tide was too strong against us. The nation was provoked by American claims to independence, and all parties joined by resolving in this act to settle the point. We might as well have hindered the sun's setting." The reader need scarce be reminded that the "claims to independence" referred to in the above extract meant independence of taxation by Parliament, in which body the colonies were unrepresented; and the people, in the spirit of which Franklin speaks in another letter, were unwilling that "*our* subjects in the colonies" should enjoy what appeared to their prejudiced eyes an immunity over subjects in the mother country. Joseph Galloway, before mentioned in this biography as one of the leaders of the popular party against the proprietaries, and who was speaker of the Assembly from 1763 to 1774, when he was delegated a member of the General Congress, writes to Franklin in January, 1776, nearly three months after the day on which the obnoxious act was to have gone into effect, "A certain sect of people, if I may judge from all their late conduct, seem to look on this as a favorable opportunity of establishing their republican principles, and of throwing off all connection with the mother country. Many of their publications justify the thought. Besides, I have other reasons to think that they are not only form-

ing a private union among themselves, from one end of the Continent to the other, but endeavoring, also, to bring into their union the Quakers, and all other dissenters, if possible. But I hope this will be impossible. *In Pennsylvania I am confident it will.*"

The phrase "American claims of independence," in Franklin's letter, has been so misquoted by high authority, that we have referred to Galloway's letter as among the strongest evidences that, at this time (1765), the idea of separation from the mother country had not yet assumed a definite shape with any party, if it was entertained at all. Galloway refers to the Stamp Act as the occasion of it; and that obnoxious act, and the consequences which followed, undoubtedly led to the separation. Indeed, one of the most able and violent pamphleteers against America, Dean Tucker, held up the idea of separation in intimidation over the colonies. His plan was "to separate totally from the colonies, and to reject them from being fellow-members and joint partakers with us in the privileges and advantages of the British Empire, because they refuse to submit to the authority and jurisdiction of the British Legislature." Such a proposed punishment as this would hardly be threatened to a people whose "claims to independence" embraced the very thing threatened as a punishment. So much for testimony upon both sides of the water. In regard to Galloway, his ulterior course, for in 1776 he deserted the American cause and became an avowed Loyalist, proves that in the

measures he supported previous to the Congress of 1774, he saw no "claims to independence."

It was charged against Franklin by his political enemies that he "approved the passage of the Stamp Act." This was contradicted by his friends, as well as by his own course at the time; and at this day it would be an act of supererogation seriously to notice the charge. One of the alleged circumstances on which it was made to rest was, that he solicited the office of stamp distributor, if not for himself, for a friend; and in the pamphlets of Dean Tucker this charge was endorsed, though afterward very ungraciously, in an evasive manner referred to by the author, in a contradiction which almost repeated the charge. Of the foundation of this rumor we can not give a better account than in the doctor's own language, addressed to the dean:

"Some days after the Stamp Act was passed, to which I had given all the opposition I could, with Mr. Grenville, I received a note from Mr. Whately, his secretary, desiring to see me the next morning. I waited upon him accordingly, and found with him several other colony agents. He acquainted us that Mr. Grenville was desirous to make the execution of the act as little inconvenient and disagreeable to America as possible, and therefore did not think of sending stamp officers from this country, but wished to have discreet and reputable persons appointed in each province from among the inhabitants, such as would be acceptable to them; for, as they were to pay the tax, he thought strangers should not have



the emolument. Mr. Whately therefore wished us to name for our respective colonies, informing us that Mr. Grenville would be obliged to us for pointing out to him honest and responsible men, and would pay great regard to our nominations. By this plausible and apparently candid declaration, we were drawn in to nominate; and I named for our province Mr. Hughes, saying, at the same time, that I knew not whether he would accept of it, but if he did, I was sure he would execute the office faithfully. I soon after had notice of his appointment. We none of us, I believe, foresaw or imagined that this compliance with the request of the minister would or could have been called an *application* of ours, and adduced as a proof of our *approbation* of the act we had been opposing, otherwise I think few of us would have named at all; I am sure I should not."

## CHAPTER XX.

THE day on which the Stamp Act was to have gone into effect in America had passed, and the measure, by the resistance of the people, had become entirely inoperative. Every officer appointed for the colonies under the act was compelled to resign his commission, and publicly to renounce his trust. Numerous acts of violence occurred in the provinces; none, however, attended with any sanguinary or ferocious conduct; and in many of the legendary narratives of the doings of the resisters against the obnoxious measure, we find evidences of a disposition for rude humor and burlesque. Threats were in most cases sufficient to answer the purpose of the men who desired not to injure individuals, but to defeat what they considered a tyrannical and unconstitutional measure. And if it was most unwelcome discipline to a loyal office-holder to be compelled to sign a recantation of his acceptance at the foot of a rebel liberty-tree, it was, in all respects, better thus than to cancel the commission by swinging the officer from the branches. Tarring and feathering appear to have been the most severe infliction administered in the popular excitement; and for that, occasion was found only in a few desperate cases of adherence to loyalty. And even then, though it must most assuredly have been no pleasant predicament when

Adown the visage, stern and grave,  
Rolled and adhered the viscid wave,

yet, as the head was left upon the shoulders, there was an opportunity for reparation left which other scenes of popular violence have denied. In Pennsylvania, and particularly in Philadelphia, where the peaceful creed of many citizens opposed all violence, their consciences seem to have been treated with great respect. Even the Loyalists, active Loyalists were leniently dealt with. Though tarring and feathering were in some cases threatened, the punishment usually went no further than a ride in a cart, not remarkable for the elasticity of its springs, and attended with circumstances the opposite of honor or of triumph. But the refreshments tendered by the laughing crowd to the executioners were often shared by the derelicts; and suffering Tory and inflicting Whig, on one or two of these mad frolics, quenched their thirst from the same punch-bowl. It was the commission, and the authority of Parliament under which it was issued, that the people aimed to dishonor and defeat, not the person of the office-holder that they sought to injure; and where a man took his punishment kindly, he suffered little actual bodily injury. Many were left entirely unmolested; and, even to those who were made examples of, the rebel cart was preferable to the hurdle of the guillotine. The forbearance of the people gave their resistance a more potent moral effect. The popular movements were thus shown to be, not the deeds of a few violent ruffians, whose conduct would be disavowed by the so-



ber and reflecting, but the pranks of men who knew that public opinion sided with them in their sentiments of resistance ; men who, in awe of that public opinion, stopped short of any deed which should draw down on them the disapproval of their countrymen, or visit their cause with dishonor, or brand their conduct with the character of barbarity.

No stamp officer ever executed his mission, and no stamps were left in the provinces at the beginning of the year 1776 ; or if any of the hated paper remained, it was in places which had defeated the most searching visits of the active resistants. The law was a dead letter. Issue was made upon it ; and it remained to the ministry to force, or attempt to force, it upon the people at the point of the bayonet ; to permit it to stand as a memorial of defeat, or to retreat from the measure with the best grace that could be assumed. Between the passage of the act and the time when, by its popular defeat, new measures were forced upon the ministry, a change had taken place. Mr. Grenville had been succeeded by the Marquis of Rockingham. As the new ministry felt under no obligation to assume the difficulties of their predecessors, they determined upon the measure of advising a repeal of the obnoxious act.

This proposition caused a debate of great warmth. As in all political questions, the point in dispute does not stand simply upon its own merits, but involves the animosities and the private views of partisans, the friends of the late ministry were active in oppo-

sition to a movement which, whatever else it might establish, conveyed reproof upon the superseded administration. In this stage of the business, Dr. Franklin was called before the committee of the whole House, to whom had been referred the petitions of the colonists, and other papers relating to the controversy. With whom this motion originated is not known; but it would appear, from memoranda left by Dr. Franklin, that the call was not unexpected; and, from the whole tenor of the examination, it appears that his friends supported and seconded it. Indeed, among the questions, as is shown by the memoranda already referred to, there were a great number the answers to which were understood by the querists before the inquiries were made. It is, therefore, more than the facts warrant to say that the doctor's answers were in all cases unpremeditated. The nature and great variety of the subjects which entered into the discussion, some directly and others remotely bearing upon the great question, required, as the doctor had given, great and patient previous attention. He had waited upon the ministry whose measure it was, and expostulated upon the mischievous nature of the Stamp Act; and unquestionably he was consulted by the new ministry, as well as by his personal friends in Parliament. Of his bearing and demeanor on the occasion of his examination, too much can not be said in praise. While he preserved his dignity, he astonished the examiners by his promptness; and in his calm self-possession he found himself at ease for the indul-

gence of an occasional gleam of humor. But Dr. Franklin had ever a high respect for the proprieties of any place in which he might be called upon to act, and never sacrificed his cause by any indulgence in misplaced wit or improper flippancy. An instance of his caution in this respect is preserved in his private notes relative to this examination, preserved by Mr. Walsh in his *Life of Franklin*. There were among the members of Parliament several gentlemen who thought that the honor of Parliament might be saved by retaining the act, while the opposition of the Americans could at the same time be overcome by amending it. Dr. Franklin had objected to this plan that it would, in fact, keep up the dispute, without yielding a sufficient revenue to pay for the collection. But one of the most active of these gentlemen told Franklin that he was sure the doctor could, if he would, suggest some amendment which would make the Americans receive the act. Dr. Franklin replied that he had thought of an amendment which might be made, and the rest of the act be suffered to remain as it stood, and give nobody in America any uneasiness. "It is," said the doctor, "a very small amendment too: it is only the change of a single word." "Ah," said the other; "what is that?" "It is in the clause," replied Franklin, "where it is said that from and after the first day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, there shall be paid, &c. The amendment I propose is, for *one* read *two*, and then all the rest of the act may stand as it is." One of the friends of the repeal had heard



of this witticism of the doctor's, and, endeavoring to give him an opportunity to repeat it before the House of Commons, asked him if he could not propose a small amendment that would make the act palatable. "But," says the doctor, "as I thought the answer he wanted too light and ludicrous for the House, I evaded the question."

The account of the examination was first published in 1767, when the rupture between the mother country and the colonies had given a historical importance to the difficulties and disputes which preceded the taking up of arms. It was translated into French, and widely read throughout Europe, as the contest had now assumed a world-wide importance. Upon the appearance of the pamphlet, a critic in the *Gentleman's Magazine* remarks upon it: "From this examination of Dr. Franklin, the reader may form a clearer and more comprehensive idea of the state and disposition of America, of the expediency or inexpediency of the measure in question, and of the character and conduct of the minister who proposed it, than from all that has been written upon the subject in newspapers and pamphlets, under the title of letters, essays, speeches, and considerations, from the first moment of its becoming the object of public attention until now. The questions in general are put with great subtlety and judgment, and they are answered with such deep and familiar knowledge of the subject, such precision and perspicuity, such temper and yet such spirit, as do the highest honor to Dr. Franklin, and justify the general opinion of his character and abilities."

With the key afforded by Dr. Franklin's memoranda, we now proceed to analyze the examination. The first half dozen questions were asked by a friend of the repeal to remove the impression that the colonists paid no taxes, and that their governments were supported by burdening the people in England. The answers comprised the substance of what Dr. Franklin had previously detailed to the questioner, Mr. Hewitt, the member for Coventry, in conversation. To his questions succeeded several by another friend, the answers to which were intended to show the impossibility of distributing the stamped paper by post to all the settlements. The next three questions, asked by a friend of the preceding administration, were intended to get out of the doctor the admission that the colonists were very well able to pay the stamp duty. But he replied that there was not specie enough in the colonies to pay it for one year; and in answer to the statement, put in the form of a question, that the money raised by the Stamp Act was all to be spent in America, he answered that it would be spent in the conquered provinces where the soldiers were, and not in the colonies that paid the tax; and that it would all find its way, not into the old colonies, but directly to England. The next question, the answers to which embraced statistics about population, trade, and other details, were asked by a friend, to show the formidable opposition which existed, from various causes, to the operation of the act; and the answers put these difficulties in their most important aspect. The



next few questions were asked by opponents, but gave the doctor an opportunity to contradict what the questioners desired to establish, viz., that the Americans wished to be protected by Great Britain, but were unwilling to pay any part of the expense; and that they laid the taxes in Pennsylvania unequally upon the merchants, in order to discourage trade with England. On the first point raised, he showed that the colonies levied and disbursed sums and furnished men to a much larger amount than they were reimbursed or paid; and on the second point he denied that any inequality of taxation existed, and showed that, even if it should be attempted, the merchant, by putting a higher price on his goods, would make the consumer finally pay the greater part of the tax, if not the whole. In this part of the examination, to the question, "Do you not think that the Americans would pay the stamp duty if it was moderated?" he answered, "No, never, unless compelled by force of arms."

Next follows a series of questions, forming one of the most interesting portions of the examination. They were asked by "Mr. Cooper and other friends, with whom I had discoursed," says the doctor, "and were intended to bring out such answers as they desired and expected from me." The answers show a witness any thing but unwilling or unprepared. To the question, "What was the temper of America toward Great Britain before the year 1763?" the doctor answered, "The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the crown,



and paid, in their courts, obedience to the acts of Parliament. Numerous as the people are in the several old provinces, they cost you nothing in forts, citadels, garrisons, or armies, to keep them in subjection. They were governed by this country only at the expense of a little pen, ink, and paper; they were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection for Great Britain; for its laws, its customs, and manners, and even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an *Old-England man* was of itself a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us." "And what," pursued the questioner, "is their temper now?" "Oh," replied the doctor, "*very much altered.*"

When asked, and by the same party, "In what light did the people of America use to consider the Parliament of Great Britain?" the answer was, "They considered the Parliament as the great bulwark and security of their liberties and privileges, and always spoke of it with the utmost respect and veneration. Arbitrary ministers, they thought, might possibly, at times, attempt to oppress them; but they relied on it that the Parliament, on application, would always give redress. They remembered, with gratitude, a strong instance of this, when a bill was brought into Parliament, with a clause to make royal instructions laws in the colonies, which the House of Commons would not pass, and it was thrown out." "And have they not still," was the next question,

“the same respect for Parliament?” “No; it is greatly lessened.” “To what cause is that owing?” “To a concurrence of causes: the restraints lately laid on their trade, by which the bringing of foreign gold and silver into the colonies was prevented, the prohibition of making paper money among themselves, and then demanding a new and heavy tax by stamps; taking away, at the same time, trials by juries, and refusing to receive and hear their humble petitions.” To the inquiry whether the colonists would submit to the act if modified, the doctor answered, “No; they will never submit to it.” And to the question how the Americans would receive a future tax, imposed on the same principle as the Stamp Act, he said, “Just as they do this; they would not pay it.”

To these questions followed a series, principally from opponents, and designed to draw out admissions favorable to the continuance of the tax: such, for instance, as the fact that the poorer class in America were better able to pay the tax than the same class in England. He was also closely questioned upon the distinction which the Americans made between duties to regulate commerce and internal taxes; and the post-office was more than once recurred to as giving an instance in which the Americans submitted to a tax without complaint. But the doctor pointed out the difference between postage, a payment for service rendered, and a tax, which is a payment of another nature. He was at home in the different statistical and other points which were pre-

sented to him, and steadily, and without crossing his own path, or making any contradictory admissions, preserved the ground, in relation to taxation, which he held in common with other American patriots. In his answers to the friends of the late ministry, he was generally most courteous and dignified; in replying to the leading questions submitted by his friends, he was prompt and spirited. For instance, to the question, "Can any thing less than a military force carry the Stamp Act into execution?" he replied, "I do not see how a military force can be applied to that purpose." "Why may it not?" "Suppose a military force sent into America, they will find nobody in arms. What are they then to do? They can not force a man to take stamps who chooses to do without them. They will not find a rebellion; they may, indeed, make one." "If the act is not repealed, what do you think will be the consequences?" "A total loss of the affection and respect the people of America bear to this country, and of all the commerce that depends on that respect and affection."

At this point, one of the late ministry put the question, "*How* can the commerce be affected?" To this Franklin answered, "You will find that if the act is not repealed, they will take very little of your manufactures in a short time." In answer to other questions, he proceeded to say that he thought the American people could do very well without British manufactures. He classed the goods received from Britain as necessities, conveniences, and superfluities. The first, he said, with a little industry they



could make at home; the second they could do without until able to provide them among themselves; and the third they would strike off immediately, as mere articles of fashion, once valued because coming from a respected country, now detested and rejected. In answer to the question whether ill humor would induce the Americans, if the Stamp Act was continued, to prefer worse manufactures of their own to better British goods, the doctor gave an answer sententious as any saying of Poor Richard's, "Yes; I think so. People will pay as much to gratify one passion as another, their resentment as their pride." And in reply to the question if, in places where stamps could be procured, people would not use them rather than remain in a situation of inability to obtain any right, or recover any debt by law, the doctor answered with a straight-forwardness, for himself, which did him high honor. "It is hard to say what they would do. I can only judge what other people will think and how they will act by what I feel within myself. I have a great many debts due to me in America, and I had rather they should remain unrecoverable by any law than submit to the Stamp Act. They will be debts of honor. It is my opinion that the people will either continue in that situation, or find some way to extricate themselves; perhaps by generally agreeing to proceed in the courts without stamps."

To some of the questions Franklin returned answers which in length could almost be termed speeches; anticipating the examiner by covering

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the whole ground, and stating all the facts relevant to the inquiry. The number of questions asked and answered, without demur or hesitation, was nearly two hundred, some of them being overlooked in the report, and not preserved. The doctor stood before the House as in effect a witness for the colonies. The questions of his friends enabled him to state the circumstances most important to the interests of his constituents, while the cross-questioning efforts of his opponents served only, by the answers elicited, to place those circumstances in a still stronger light. The nature of the inquiries propounded by many different members, each *au fait*, or imagining himself so, upon some particular feature of the subject, or some single bearing or aspect of the measure, developed a knowledge and experience in the witness such as, we may fairly presume, were possessed by no other individual in the British Empire. Occasionally a knotty question of polity was presented, as, for instance, "Suppose the king should require the colonies to grant a revenue, and the Parliament should be against their doing it, do they think they can grant a revenue to the king without the consent of the Parliament of Great Britain?" Franklin answered, "That is a deep question. As to my own opinion, I should think myself at liberty to do it, and should do it, if I liked the occasion."

It is hardly necessary to remark that the last two questions which were asked, and which have been more quoted than any other, were put by friends: "What used to be the pride of the Americans?"

To indulge in the fashions and manufactures of Great Britain." "What is now their pride?" "To wear their old clothes over again, till they can make new ones."

After a long and warm debate, the obnoxious act was repealed. In that debate some of the members did not spare the doctor, or the constituents whom he represented. Mr. Nugent, who had been one of the busiest of the examiners, made a violent speech, the following extract from which is preserved in Franklin's notes: "We have often experienced Austrian ingratitude, and yet we assisted Portugal. We experienced Portuguese ingratitude, and yet we assisted America. But what is Austrian ingratitude, what the ingratitude of Portugal, compared to this of America? We have fought, bled, and ruined ourselves to conquer for them, and now they come and tell us to our noses, even at the bar of this House, that they were not obliged to us." In the course of Franklin's examination, he had, indeed, shown that the colonies had little occasion for gratitude, having done more for themselves than the British government did for them, and having suffered more for the British Empire than they had been requited for. He showed that even in the wars which had grown out of colonial questions, it was the honor of the crown, or the interests of British traders and manufacturers, and not the welfare of the old and loyal colonies, which was at stake. And he exhibited, moreover, the fact that the old provinces had been embroiled in war, and exposed to ravages and



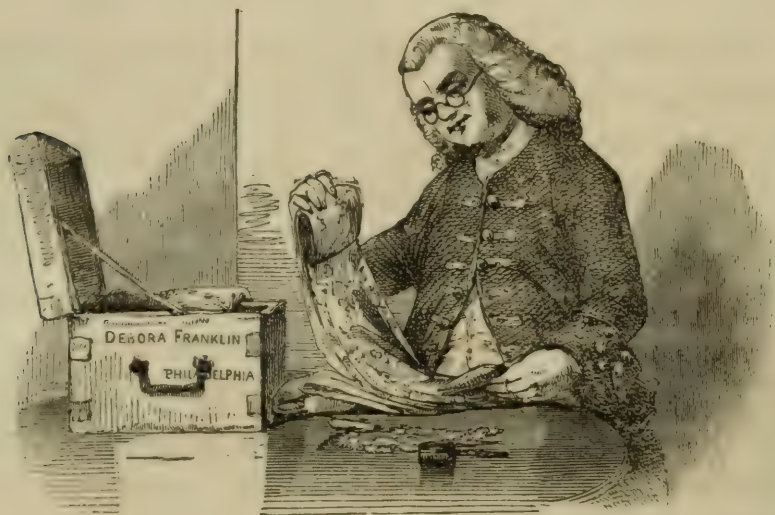
incursions from the Indians, by distant boundary disputes between England and France, in which, except as Britons, alive to the honor of the whole nation, they had no concern. He exposed the fact that of the large regular force nominally employed in the provinces, the greater part were in distant garrisons, while the colonists themselves, with very slight assistance, bore the burden of the war.

The Stamp Act was repealed. But the eagerness of debate had called out hot words, which caused the measure to be shorn of much of its propitiatory character. Ministers were accused of having sacrificed the dignity of the realm by giving way before a rebellious spirit; and to save appearances, the Declaratory Act was passed, in which was asserted the right of Parliament "to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." As this declaration was accompanied by no immediate exercise of the right it affirmed, but rather by a practical waiving of that right, if it existed, in the repeal of the Stamp Act, it gave little present uneasiness. But the thoughtful saw in it the germ of future difficulties and unhappiness. The principle which it involved either was the deliberate opinion of the British government, or it was forced upon that government, as a rule of conduct, by the fact of having asserted it. It placed an obstacle in the way of reconciliation which was never overcome, and aided the rankling discontent which broke out in open war when the British ministry attempted to carry out the doctrine that Parliament had absolute and arbitrary right of rule over the provinces.

## CHAPTER XXI

THE bill to repeal the Stamp Act passed the Commons in February, 1766, and the Lords in March, receiving the royal assent on the 18th of the same month. Writing to his wife in April, Franklin says, "My dear child, as the Stamp Act is at length repealed, I am willing you should have a new gown, which you may suppose I did not send sooner, as I knew you would not like to be finer than your neighbors, unless in a gown of your own spinning. Had the trade between the two countries totally ceased, it was a comfort to me to recollect that I had once been clothed from head to foot in woolen and linen of my wife's manufacture; that I never was prouder of any dress in my life; and that she and her daughter might do it again, if it was necessary. I told the Parliament that it was my opinion, before the old clothes of the Americans were worn out, they might have new ones of their own making. I have sent you a fine piece of Pompadour satin, fourteen yards, cost eleven shillings a yard; a silk negligée, and petticoat of brocaded lutestring for my dear Sally, with two dozen gloves, four bottles of lavender water, and two little reels." The letter then goes on to enumerate various other articles, and describes their use. Among the merchandise in the inventory are

mentioned "three fine cheeses." One can scarce forbear a smile, at this distance of time, in thinking of "Poor Richard" forwarding such a consignment as Pompadour satin, lavender, corkscrews, and



cheeses; but the smile is inevitable when we find the doctor suggesting in his letter that "perhaps a bit of the cheese may be left when he comes home." We have before remarked on the interest he took in minute affairs about his household, as shown in his letters. An extract from a letter to him from his wife, written a few months previous to the above, will give her testimony to his character. The conclusion is exquisite. The original is in the possession of Mr. Watson, the annalist. She is describing the arrangement of their new house, erected during the doctor's absence, in Franklin Court:

"In the room down stairs is the sideboard, which



is very handsome and plain, with two tables made to suit it, and a dozen of chairs also. The chairs are plain horse-hair, and look as well as Paduasoy, and are admired by all. The little south room I have papered, as the walls were very much soiled. In this room is a carpet I bought cheap for its goodness, and nearly new. The large carpet is in the blue room. In the parlor is a Scotch carpet, which has had much fault found with it. Your time-piece stands in one corner, which is, as I am told, all wrong; but I say we shall have all these as they should be when you come home. If you could meet with a Turkey carpet, I should like it; but if not, I shall be very easy, for as to these things I have become quite indifferent at this time. In the north room, where we sit, we have a small Scotch carpet, the small book-case, brother John's picture, and one of the king and queen. In the room for our friends we have the Earl of Bute hung up, and a glass. May I desire you to remember drinking-glasses, and a large table-cloth or two; also a pair of silver canisters? The closed doors in your room have been framed for glasses, unknown to me; I shall send you an account of the panes required. I shall also send the measures of the fire-places, and the piers of glass. The chimneys do well, and I have baked in the oven, and found it is good. The room we call yours has in it a desk, the harmonica made like a desk, a large chest with all the writings, the boxes of glasses for music and for the electricity, and all your clothes. The pictures are not put up, as I do not like to drive

nails, lest they should not be right. The blue room has the harmonica, the harpsichord, the gilt sconce, a card-table, a set of tea-china, the worked chairs and screen, a very handsome stand for the tea-kettle to stand on, and the ornamental china. The paper of this room has lost much of its bloom by pasting up. The curtains are not yet made. The south room is my sleeping-room with my Susannah, where we have a bed without curtains, a chest of drawers, a table, a glass, and old black-walnut chairs, and some of our family pictures. I have taken all the dead letters, and the papers that were in the garret, with the books not taken by Billy [William T. Franklin], and had them boxed and barreled up, and put in the south garret, to await your return. Sally has the south room, up two pair of stairs, having therein a bed, bureau, table, glass, and the picture—a trunk and books—but these you can't have any notion of. \* \* \* \* \* Oh, my child! there is a great odds between a man's being at home and abroad: as every body is afraid they shall do wrong—so every thing is left undone."

Mrs. Franklin little imagined, when she was writing this epistle, that it would be preserved as illustrative of the character of her husband in his own house. The fear about going wrong with the nails, and the "oh dear!" in the conclusion about a present or absent husband, give us an insight into the private methodical arrangements of the philosopher which could not be expressed in a page of description. There are, in his correspondence, minute directions

to her about the same "blue room," which gave the good housewife so much trouble with its "faded bloom;" but we have given sufficient for our purpose on this head. Another letter of Mrs. Franklin we quote, as giving an idea of the height to which the enemies of Dr. Franklin had inflamed the popular mind by the slanders relative to his connection with the Stamp Act, noticed in a previous chapter:

"You will see by the papers what work has happened in other places, and something has been said relative to raising a mob here. I was for five days kept in one continued hurry to remove, and was persuaded to go to Burlington for safety; but on Monday last we had very great rejoicing on account of the change of the ministry, and a preparation for bonfires at night, and several houses threatened to be pulled down. Cousin Davenport came and told me that more than twenty people had told him that it was his duty to be with me. I said I was pleased to receive civility from any body; so he stayed with me some time. Toward night I said he should fetch a gun or two, as we had none. I sent to ask my brother to come, and bring his gun also; so we made our room into a magazine. I ordered some kind of defense up stairs, such as I could manage myself. I said, when I was advised to remove, that I was very sure you had done nothing to hurt any body, nor had I given offense to any person at all, neither would I be made uneasy by any body, nor would I stir, or show the least uneasiness; but if **any** one came to disturb me, I would show a proper



resentment, and I should be very much affronted with any body to hinder me. I was told that there were eight hundred men ready to assist any one that should be molested. \* \* \* \* It is Mr. S. S. that is setting the people mad, by telling them it was you that had planned the Stamp Act, and that you are endeavoring to get the Test Act brought over here; but as I don't go much to town, I maybe shall be easy for a while after the election is over, but till that I shall be disturbed."

In speaking of events at this period in Pennsylvania, we must remember that there was a prominent subject of public attention in a matter now forgotten, or little thought of, overshadowed as it has been by the great events which preceded the Revolution — we mean the petitions for a change of the proprietary government of Pennsylvania. The opponents of this measure were quick to perceive the points in which the conduct of Franklin appeared most vulnerable; and ingenuity was taxed to produce lampoons, caricatures, and grave charges, in order, through abuse of Franklin, to render the party which appointed him odious. Among the caricatures was one representing the philosopher in conference with a personage who claims *all* the kingdoms of the earth, and who, with his head as near that of Franklin as his horns will admit, is whispering, "Thee shall be *agent*, Ben, for all *my* realms."

But while the enemies of Franklin were thus active, his friends were not idle. They rejoiced at the opportunity which his examination before the Com-

mons gave him to vindicate his fame from the aspersions which had been cast upon it, and caused to be published the letters received from various persons in England, commendatory of the bearing of the doctor before Parliament, and setting forth the service which he had rendered his country by the representations and labors which, even his enemies were compelled to admit, aided the ministry more than any other single cause or agent could do, in carrying the repeal of the obnoxious law. The reaction which followed the popular abuse of the doctor—for that it was popular is evident from the manner in which his house was threatened—placed him in a higher and firmer position in the affections of the people than ever before. A letter to him from Joseph Galloway, dated in May, 1766, says: “The numerous accounts we have of my dear friend’s integrity and address in procuring the repeal, give us all the greatest pleasure, and have opened the eyes of many, who entertained a contrary opinion of you, from the wicked calumnies of your enemies. Some few there are yet, who, with unwearied industry, are endeavoring, by their malevolent falsehoods, to injure your good name, but it will be without effect. The proprietary party will never desist from their abuse of you.” But the proprietary party was soon to be lost in other divisions, and the struggles for different forms of colonial government to be forgotten in the effort to shake off colonial dependence. Perhaps, in strict impartiality, something is due to the proprietors themselves, as unwitting aids to the

Revolution. Their resistance to the wishes of the people, and the impediments which their policy threw in the way of prompt and equal legislation, prepared many Pennsylvanians for the Revolution who might, under a harmonious colonial government, have rested content in their allegiance to Great Britain.

Dr. Franklin, who had an opportunity, from his residence abroad, to perceive how every trifle was magnified to the disparagement of the colonies, urged, in his correspondence with his friends in America, that they should give way to no undue exultation on account of the repeal of the Stamp Act. "I trust," he says, "that the behavior of the Americans on this occasion will be so prudent and grateful, that their friends here will have no reason to be ashamed; and that our enemies, who predict that the indulgence will make us more insolent and ungovernable, may find themselves false prophets." And again: "The partisans of the late ministry have been strongly crying out *rebellion*, and calling for force to be sent against America. The consequence might have been terrible; but milder measures have prevailed. I hope, nay, I am confident, America will show itself grateful to Britain on the occasion, and behave prudently and decently."

The leading friends of Franklin in Philadelphia strove to carry out his advice; but the tide was too strong against them. The people were elated, and were determined to give loose to their exultation. And the British authorities took the lead in manifestations of rejoicing. In Boston the mansion of



Governor Gage was brilliantly illuminated ; in New York the Loyalists were hearty participants in the rejoicings, and in Philadelphia the proprietary party took the lead in illuminations and festivities. It is generally said that these measures were taken to neutralize the anticipated rejoicings of the people. No doubt this motive had its share in producing the festive demonstrations of the Loyalists ; but there is as little doubt that the authorities, though for a different reason from the people, were quite as glad as they at the repeal. They perceived the dangers which would attend any attempt at the enforcement of the law ; and some of the Loyalists were shrewd enough to perceive among the opponents of the Stamp Act some persons who really desired that it might be persisted in by the ministry. These trusted, in the struggle, should Great Britain remain obstinate, to obtain a greater guerdon than the repeal of a single oppressive enactment. Joseph Galloway, who, though a friend of the popular cause up to the assembling of the first Congress, declared himself a Tory when the issue of separation was made, expressed these suspicions of the intentions of some of the Americans in a letter to Franklin, dated in May, 1766.

When the news of the repeal was received in Philadelphia, the gentlemen at the " Coffee House " sent an invitation to the captain of the vessel by which the intelligence was brought, inviting him to the house to partake of refreshments. By the " gentlemen at the Coffee House," men of no small consid-

eration are to be understood. The meetings of the Common Council were at that time held at "The Coffee House," or at "Herbert Carey's Inn." At the Coffee House the governor held daily, at about the same hour, a sort of informal levee, and other persons of note and standing frequented it. Connected with the house was the parade; here auctions were held, and all matters of public commercial and political interest found here their center. Whenever any rumor agitated the public mind, this was the point to which all tended to ascertain facts or verify intelligence. The "gentlemen at the Coffee House" who invited Captain Wise to take punch with them, and presented him with a gold-laced hat, not forgetting his crew in their joy, gave the direction to the public humor. Punch flowed freely, and barrels of beer were put on tap for the people. The city was illuminated in the evening, and on the next day an entertainment was given by the provincial and Philadelphia authorities to over three hundred persons. At this feast, it was resolved, on the coming royal birth-day, June the 4th, that all should appear in new suits of British manufacture, and that the home-spun garments, which had been worn from a patriotic feeling, should be presented to the poor. Against these demonstrations the calm and cautious movements of the friends of Franklin could make no impression. They appealed to the authorities to no purpose, and therefore contented themselves with private efforts to preserve the peace, walking the streets through the night as a voluntary patrol.

On the king's birth-day, occasion was taken to blend with the observation of that anniversary the celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act. Four or five hundred persons dined in a grove on the banks of the Schuylkill. A barge called the Franklin was rowed up the river to the place of entertainment. Decorated with flags, and firing salutes as progress was made up the river, the Franklin performed the water part of the pageant to admiration. At the same time, another barge was drawn through the streets, decorated in like manner, and also treating the people to salutes. At the dinner, after the King, the Royal Family, and the Parliament, those individuals who had been active in procuring the passage of the act of repeal were honored, and one of the toasts was, "*Our worthy and faithful agent, Dr. Franklin.*" The rejoicings were concluded with fireworks and an illumination. In a letter to Franklin from Thomas Wharton, the writer says, "I have inclosed thee a newspaper of this date, in which thou wilt find that we rejoice, but not in such a manner as can give our enemies handle against us, and that my friend is not forgotten by a respectable part of the people, I mean the free and independent in judgment." Probably the rejoicings on this occasion gave the worthy wife of the philosopher less uneasiness than the demonstrations which took place a few months before, upon the occasion of the change of ministry. All the friends of the absent patriot must have experienced a feeling of honest and gratified triumph at his complete vindication from the



charges, which certainly possessed, in the appointment of his friend as a stamp officer, color enough for party purposes.

By the journals of the Pennsylvania Assembly, it appears that Dr. Franklin asked permission of the House to return in the spring of 1766. No motion was, however, taken on this application. Such evidences had been given of the agent's eminent usefulness in London, and the world was now so fond of honoring the representative of Pennsylvania abroad, that it was doubtless felt that no other could make his place good. Among the first acts of the Assembly, on its meeting in September, was a resolution renewing his appointment.

During the summer of 1766, Dr. Franklin accompanied his friend, Sir John Pringle, on a visit to Germany. Sir John visited Pymont for the benefit of the waters; Dr. Franklin, who counted more on advantages from air, exercise, and change of scene, left his friend at the springs, and made a hurried visit to the principal cities nearest to Pymont. At Göttingen, Hanover, and other places, he was received with flattering attention. His philosophical discoveries and writings had given him a wider fame on the Continent than even in England or at home, for in Germany he was not the subject of any party enmity. Probably little was yet known of his political importance; and the Germans, content with the fact that he was the delegate of his countrymen abroad, were satisfied with that evidence that the great philosopher was no less a statesman. The results of

his examination before the House of Commons, which did more than any previous act to give him celebrity as a political economist, had not then been published.

A remarkable instance of the activity of Dr. Franklin's mind is preserved in a series of pamphlets, formerly his property, now in the Athenæum at Philadelphia. The margins of many contain notes in the hand-writing of the doctor, indicating an intention to publish a reply to their allegations and reasonings. These notes are valuable to his fame now, as posthumous witnesses against those who charged that he was consulting rather his own interest than the public service during his residence abroad—charges which were imbodyed with more point than truth in the following lines, which accompanied a caricature published in Philadelphia :

“ All his designs concenter in himself,  
For building castles, and amassing pelf;  
The *public* 'tis his wit to sell for gain,  
Whom *private* property did ne'er maintain.”

Some slight pretext was perhaps given to this charge by the appointment of his son as governor of New Jersey, of which we have already spoken in its order. There were rumors, at various times, of appointments which Franklin never received, and all the inference which can be drawn from them is to the honor of the doctor; for we can but conclude that if he had a price it was never ascertained, for he was never bought. A company was formed, during his second visit to England, for the purpose of

obtaining a grant from the crown for a new colony on the Ohio. William T. Franklin and Dr. Franklin were stockholders, and the governor was Mr. Thomas Walpole, a banker of London, from whom the tract of land solicited by the company has usually been called Walpole's Grant. The doctor's influence was especially counted on to obtain the charter; and he certainly exerted himself to the utmost, and ultimately with success, though the occurrence of Revolutionary events frustrated the completion of the plan. In prosecuting the furtherance of the object of the petitioners, Dr. Franklin wrote several able papers and a great deal of correspondence; but he was no further interested, nor was his son, than any other stockholder.

But the best evidence of the sincerity of the doctor's service of his constituents is contained in the marginal notes to pamphlets before referred to, a portion of which have been laid before the public by Mr. Sparks in his collection of the Writings of Franklin. Among these pamphlets were the Protests of certain members of the House of Lords against the repeal of the Stamp Act; and brochures from the pen of Dean Tucker, who appears to have suffered under a species of singular animosity against the colonies. In remarking upon some declaration in one of the Protests, Franklin makes the following note, to which subsequent events have given the character of prophecy: "Anxious about preserving the sovereignty of this country? [England.] Rather be so about preserving the liberty. We shall be



so about the liberty of America, that your posterity may have a free country to come to, where they will be received with open arms."

As the doctor made his notes with a view of publishing a reply to the Protests, we find in one place what he probably intended as a conclusion: "I say nothing to your lordships that I have not been indulged to say to the Commons. Your lordship's names are to your Protest, therefore I think I ought to put mine to the Answer. I desire that what I have said may not be imputed to the colonies. I am a private person, and do not write by their direction. I am over here to solicit, in behalf of my colony, a closer connection with the crown." Probably the publication of the examination was deemed by the doctor sufficient, as he declares that whatever he purposed to say in his Reply to the Protests was said in his examination. We can not close our notice of these hints for a reply without extracting the following nervous passage:

"My duty to the king, and justice to the country, will, I hope, justify me if I likewise *protest*, which I now do, with all humility, in behalf of myself, and of every American, and of our posterity, against your Declaratory Bill, that the Parliament of Great Britain has not, never had, and of right never can have, without consent given either before or after, power to make laws of sufficient force to bind the subjects in America, in any case whatever, and particularly in taxation. I can only judge of others by myself. I have some little property in America. I will free-

ly spend nineteen shillings in the pound to defend my right of giving or refusing the other shilling; and, after all, if I can not defend that right, I will retire cheerfully with my little family into the boundless woods of America, which are sure to afford freedom and subsistence to any man who can bait a hook or pull a trigger."

The notes upon the Protests appear to have been made at about this period, 1766-7. Those upon the pamphlets of Dean Tucker contain references to later events. Throughout the whole he keeps in view the refutation of certain false premises which continually appeared in English publications and speeches, such, for instance, as that the people of England were in some sort sovereigns of America; that Parliament had a right to tax unrepresented colonies; and that Great Britain had brought the provinces in her debt by money expended on them in their protection. To the allegation in Dean Tucker's "Good Humor, a Way with the Colonies," that the people of Great Britain were taxed for the defense of the Provinces, and "all was granted when you cried for help," Franklin answers:

"This is wickedly false. While the colonies were weak and poor, not a penny nor a single soldier was ever spared by Britain for their defense. But as soon as the trade with them became an object, and a fear arose that the French would seize that trade and deprive her of it, she sends troops to America *unasked*. And she now brings this account of the expense against us, which should be rather carried

to her own merchants and manufacturers. We joined our troops and treasure with her to help her in this war. Of this no notice is taken. To refuse to pay a just debt is knavish; not to return an obligation is ingratitude; but to demand a payment of a debt where none has been contracted, to forge a bond or an obligation in order to demand what was never due, is villainy. Every year both king and Parliament, during the war, acknowledged that we had done more than our part, and made us some return, which is equivalent to a receipt in full, and entirely sets aside this monstrous claim."

In the autumn of 1767 Dr. Franklin visited France. He had letters of introduction from the French ambassador to several eminent persons in Paris; but his published works had been his best introduction. In visiting France he visited a country in which his electrical experiments had been repeated and verified, under the sanction of the highest in the state, and in which his writings were not only familiar to the learned, but had been made, by translation, accessible to a much wider circle. He was presented at court, and made among the political circles many new acquaintances; for French politicians could not have passed unnoticed the increasing disputes between Great Britain and her colonies. With scientific men his meeting was more like a recognition than an introduction. His peculiar sagacity and happy address confirmed and increased the impression in his favor; and the visit to Paris, while it was productive of great present pleas-



ure to the philosopher and statesman, undoubtedly made his official residence in subsequent years more serviceable to his country. His quick perceptions never permitted any opportunity for acquiring useful knowledge to pass unimproved; his knowledge of human nature gave him a keen insight into character; and his facility of adaptation enabled him to improve to the utmost whatever advantage his position conferred upon him. He laughingly alludes to the appearance which he made, as transformed by a French tailor and perruquier into a man twenty



years younger; and he shows, by the pleasant description written to his friends of French men, women, and things, that he could enter with the most juvenile gayety of heart into the relaxation which his official fatigues had rendered desirable.

## CHAPTER XXII.

JOHN ADAMS, in speaking of the course of Franklin, said, "His conduct has been very composed and grave, and, in the opinion of many, very reserved, yet entirely American." His position, prior to the Revolutionary war, and, indeed, during his whole residence abroad, was one of exceeding difficulty. It is to be recollected that he was in England as the agent of colonists who, claiming to be loyal subjects, on that account and in that character preferred petitions to the crown. However much his sympathies might incline him to feel with his countrymen, it was absolutely necessary that he should be "reserved," or he would have made shipwreck of his official trust. Nor are we to regard the advocates of extreme measures against government in America as the only patriots and the only friends of their country. Many hoped to the last that a rupture would be prevented, and the integrity of the British Empire preserved, while her colonies still would receive their rights. And the period has now arrived, in the subsidence of national prejudice, and the abatement of that hatred which was engendered by oppression, when we can look with charitable feelings even upon those Americans who preserved their loyalty and remained true to the British crown. It

is doing a great injustice to the characters and motives of men to judge them by consequences, or, as it may be better expressed, to look at their actions in the light reflected upon them by subsequent events. They could not with any certainty look into futurity, and we must try them, therefore, by the circumstances in which they were placed.

Franklin did not approve of those measures of his countrymen upon which we, in view of what followed, are now accustomed to look with unqualified praise. He was very discreet, and not inclined to hazard the fortunes of the colonies upon acts of violence or expressions of defiance. And, as already noted, he was himself exposed to great annoyance and inconvenience by every symptom of resistance in America. How much he was stung and annoyed may be gathered from the following extract from a letter to his son, written in November, 1767. "I think the New Yorkers have been very discreet in forbearing to write and publish against the late act of Parliament. I wish the Boston people had been as quiet, since Governor Bernard has sent over all their violent papers to the ministry, and wrote them word that he daily expected a rebellion. He did, indeed, afterward correct this extravagance, by writing again, that he now understood those papers were approved but by few, and disliked by all the sober, sensible people of the province. A certain noble lord expressed himself to me with some contempt and disgust of Bernard on this occasion, saying he ought to have known his people better than to im-



pute to the whole country sentiments that perhaps are only scribbled by some madman in a garret."

The act above referred to was one passed in pursuance of the assertion of the Declaratory Act, that Parliament had "a right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." It imposed duties on certain articles imported into the colonies, not, as formerly, for the regulation of trade, but to raise a revenue, thus affirming, in a different but quite as objectionable a manner, the right of the Parliament to tax the colonies, which had been the great matter of remonstrance in the Stamp Act. And the act of 1767 was further, and very naturally, hateful to the colonies, because it provided for the establishment of a Board of Commissioners at Boston to collect and distribute the money. Another dangerous measure was, that out of this revenue certain officers should be paid, who had hitherto been dependent for their salaries on the colonial Legislature; and the people justly feared the effect of making their government entirely independent of the governed. These movements on the part of the British ministry called out the storm of indignation to which Franklin referred in the letter above quoted, and further embroiled the governor and the Legislature, which body in Massachusetts truly represented the people. Franklin was absent in France when the commissioners left England for America. Although a connection was one of the Board, he writes to his son, "I assure you I had not the least share in his appointment, having carefully kept out of the way of that whole affair'

As a hint was never lost upon Dr. Franklin, he probably learned caution in the history of the Stamp Act, and did not care to have his approval of this act inferred by his enemies.

Governor Bernard, who was for several years in an angry contest with the Legislature of Massachusetts, at last hit upon a new method of annoyance, which procured him peace and rest; that is to say, so far as these desirable objects could be secured by silencing legal and regular opposition. He used his prerogative to shorten the sessions of the Legislature, and delayed and refused to convene it at the request of the people. But the spirit of resistance, the expression of which was prevented under legislative sanction, found utterance in another mode. The inhabitants of Boston met in town meeting, and passed a series of resolutions to encourage industry, economy, and domestic manufactures, and thus to defeat the Revenue Act by putting an end to imports. Similar measures had taken place in Philadelphia, but were relaxed on the repeal of the Stamp Act. The Boston movement had, however, a more formal and public character than any of the same nature which preceded it. A committee was appointed at the town meeting to procure subscriptions to an agreement not to use British articles or superfluities of any description, and the example of Boston was followed by other towns. The most wealthy and influential families made a pride of their simplicity, and the general and united resistance of the Massachusetts people caused their movement to assume, in

the eyes of the ministerial party in England, the hue of rebellion. And the friends of America in Great Britain, or rather, we should say, the opponents of the policy of the Grenville ministry, were sorely pushed by the newspapers. Franklin says, in a letter dated in December, 1767, "The newspapers are in full cry against America. You can not conceive how much the friends of America are run upon and hurt by them, and how much the Grenvillians triumph." And again: "The proceedings in Boston, as the news came just upon the meeting of Parliament, and occasioned great clamor here, gave me much concern. And, as every offensive thing done in America is charged upon all, and every province, though not concerned in it, suffers in its interests through the general disgust given, and the little distinction here made, it became necessary, I thought, to palliate the matter a little for our own sakes, and therefore I wrote the paper which you have probably seen in the Chronicle of January 7th, signed 'F. S.'"

The paper referred to, entitled "Causes of American Discontents before 1768," is written in Franklin's peculiarly smooth and convincing style, with the skill for which he was remarkable in controversy. The drift of it was to show that the ministry had needlessly exasperated the Americans, who readily and cheerfully gave money to the crown, provided they could be permitted to give it in what they considered a constitutional and loyal mode, while they resisted all attempts to force taxation upon them in



any manner which they regarded as violating the privileges secured to them as subjects by *Magna Charta*. At the close of the paper, after quoting some paragraphs from the American newspapers and other sources, he adroitly adds, "These are the wild ravings of the, at present, half-distracted Americans. To be sure no reasonable man in England can approve of such sentiments, and, as I said before, I do not pretend to support or justify them; but I sincerely wish, for the sake of the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain, and for the sake of the strength which a firm union with our growing colonies would give us, that these people had never been thus needlessly driven out of their senses." It will be perceived that this paper was written under the disguise of an Englishman, an allowable artifice to give it weight. Franklin complained that the editor of the *Chronicle*, "one Jones, seems a Grenvillian, or is very cautious, as you will see by his corrections and omissions. He has drawn the teeth and pared the nails of my paper, so that it can neither scratch nor bite. It seems only to paw and mumble." One can not help wishing to believe that the paragraph just quoted passed under the correcting fingers of "one Jones, a Grenvillian," for there is nothing in the "sentiments" quoted by Franklin which he had not in other publications presented as his own, and called upon "reasonable men" in England to receive. In the same letter in which Franklin tells his son that he had written the paper for the *Chronicle*, he adds the following sound advice: "If our people

should follow the Boston example, in entering into resolutions of frugality and industry, *full as necessary for us as for them*, I hope they will, among other things, give this reason, that it is to enable them more speedily and effectually to discharge their debts to Great Britain. This will soften a little, and, at the same time, appear honorable and like ourselves."

Dr. Franklin caused the republication in England of John Dickinson's famous "Farmer's Letters." He contributed to the volume a preface, in the character of an Englishman, in which he expresses the hope that the publication will produce "a full answer, if *we* can make one." It would be an interesting point could it be ascertained how far or how well the doctor preserved his incognito in these cases. He was unreserved, in his American correspondence, in acknowledging the authorship of these several pieces to his friends; and if he was not more wary in his conversation, the purpose of his assumption of a feigned character was defeated.

In 1768 there was a change in the British ministry. Lord Hillsborough was made Secretary of State for America, a new bureau then first established. Mr. William S. Johnson, the agent in England for the State of Connecticut, wrote respecting this appointment, "All American affairs will now be thrown into an entire new channel; all is to begin anew with Lord Hillsborough; new negotiations are to be commenced, new connections formed, which is an unhappy delay to all who have affairs to solicit." Lord Hillsborough was generally court

eous, but capricious, opinionated, and unyielding, and the agents of the colony found much delay and difficulty in their official intercourse with him, as he interposed new and unexpected forms and requirements, from some of which, as entirely incompatible with the relations and duties of the agents, he was compelled to recede in effect, though he preserved his self-complacency by a nominal adherence. He seemed, at first, disposed to receive the agents of the colonies kindly, but afterward established the rule that no agent could be recognized as such who was not appointed by regular act of Assembly, signed by the governor of the colony. Franklin expostulated, but in vain. The agent did not represent the governor, but the people; and to give the governor, and, through him, the ministry, the appointment of agents, would entirely defeat the purposes for which the colonial legislatures had maintained agents abroad. Franklin, when Lord Hillsborough broached this new arrangement to him, after he found that all reasoning upon the subject was vain, bluntly told his lordship that he perceived that it was of little consequence whether the appointment of agents was recognized or not; for, as the affairs of the colonies were now administered, agents could be of little service. Lord Hillsborough carried out his policy by procuring the passage of a resolution by the Board of Trade, that no agents, unless qualified as before mentioned, would be allowed to appear before that body. Their business was, during Lord Hillsborough's official term, conducted by written applica-



tions, and indirect influence with the members; for the colonial legislatures never followed the plan indicated by his lordship.

Perhaps there was more than a little personal hostility on the part of Lord Hillsborough toward Franklin, which led to these measures. Doctor Franklin had been very active in opposing certain measures contemplated by Lord Hillsborough, who of all men could least endure contradiction. As the personal passages between his lordship and the doctor form quite an interesting episode, we will follow them out in this place, though to the anticipation of the regular narrative. Lord Hillsborough, in conversation respecting Franklin, after the interview in relation to his agency, spoke of the doctor as a factious fellow, mischievous, and a Republican. His industry, by his pen and in every other mode, to put the public mind right in relation to his country, and his sturdy opposition of facts and common sense to the abstractions and theories of the closet-politicians of England, made him particularly disagreeable to ministers. In fact, while his countrymen at home were some of them accusing him of apathy and indifference, his friends in England were surprised at his boldness, and all admired the capital prudence with which he conducted himself in his very trying position of umpire between the mother country and the colonies; and, though willing to accede more to the ministry than his heated friends in the colonies would have done, he still so warily guarded the *principles* for which they contended, that it was dis-

covered that nothing could be made of him but an American.

In 1771, while Dr. Franklin was on a visit to Ireland, he met Lord Hillsborough at the lord-lieutenant's in Dublin. His lordship was exceedingly civil, and pressed Dr. Franklin so earnestly to call at Hillsborough during his contemplated journey northward, that the doctor could not, without rudeness, refuse; and when, in acceptance of the invitation of Lord Hillsborough, Franklin and his party called at his lordship's seat, they were detained four days, during which time the party, and the doctor in particular, were overwhelmed with civilities. "In short," says the doctor, "he seemed extremely anxious to impress me, and the colonies through me, with a good opinion of him: all which I could not but wonder at, knowing that he likes neither them nor me; and I thought it inexplicable but on the supposition that he apprehended an approaching storm, and was desirous of lessening, beforehand, the number of enemies he had so imprudently created. But if he takes no steps toward withdrawing the troops, repealing the duties, restoring the castle, or recalling the offensive instructions, I shall think all the plausible behavior I have described is meant only, by patting and stroking the horse, to make him more patient, while the reins are drawn tighter, and the spurs set deeper into his sides."

The letter, from which the above is an extract, was addressed to Mr. Cushing, of Massachusetts, in 1771, and the troops spoken of were those which

had been sent into that province to enforce the obnoxious revenue law. Much weight is undoubtedly due to the doctor's opinion, that Lord Hillsborough wished to impress him favorably, to produce an influence upon the public business. But there was a matter of less public interest, in which the pride of Lord Hillsborough was deeply interested, and in reference to which we may well suppose his personal conduct was somewhat guided. He had conceived an idea, and was forming the plan, of a boundary line for the American colonies, to be drawn from the Hudson River to the Mississippi, and confining the settlements between that line and the ocean. "Walpole's Grant," for which Franklin was one of the petitioners, and the business of which he managed with his usual discretion and indefatigability, interfered with Lord Hillsborough's theory. His lordship, therefore, earnestly opposed the petition, and labored against it from the beginning. As some movement was made by the petitioners as early as 1766, it is not assuming too much, perhaps, to conclude that Lord Hillsborough had some eye to the frustration of Franklin in the matter of the Walpole Grant when he procured the passage, by the Board of Trade, of the regulation respecting colonial agents. But, in the indirect prosecution of his business with the Board of Trade by written applications, Franklin was, perhaps, even more formidable to Lord Hillsborough than before.

Lord Hillsborough, as President of the Board of Trade, drew up a report against the petition, which



was submitted to the king in council. Dr. Franklin answered his lordship's report, and that in so very able a manner that the petition was granted. Hillsborough had declared that if the petition was granted he would resign his post as Secretary of State for America; and he did resign, it is said, for that reason only. Perhaps, as Dr. Franklin intimates, he thought himself of so much consequence that the petition would be set aside rather than that his resignation would be accepted. The event, if such were his expectations, disappointed him, and he was very much chagrined.

While these affairs were pending, Dr. Franklin waited upon Lord Hillsborough to thank him for his civility in Ireland, and was told that 'his lordship was not at home. He met the same repulse upon three more visits, the last being under circumstances



of peculiar incivility. It was on a levee day, when a number of carriages was at his lordship's door. Franklin's coachman drove up, alighted, and was opening the carriage, when the porter came out and surlily chid the coachman for opening the door before he had inquired whether his lordship was at home. Then, turning to Franklin, he said, "My lord is not at home." The truth was, that his own rash declaration, and Dr. Franklin's firmness, cost him his place, and he could not endure the doctor on that account. Yet, more than a year after his resignation, while Dr. Franklin was at Oxford, Lord Hillsborough called at his room, and, with the utmost apparent cordiality and friendship, said, "Dr. Franklin, I did not know till this minute that you were here, and I am come to make you my bow. I am glad to see you at Oxford, and that you look so well." The conversation continued for a short time, but there is no trace of any further intercourse. This little incident is, however, in perfect keeping with the character of a capricious man, whose anger had betrayed him into a weakness. His pride afterward induced him to endeavor to remove the impression which his caprice had left—that his opponent had mortified as well as defeated him.

In this connection we insert the following "Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One." This brochure has justly been regarded as among Doctor Franklin's happiest political writings, and it is the more apropos in this place, as it purported in its title to have been "presented to a late minister when he

entered upon his administration." That "late minister" was Hillsborough; and the "Rules," published after his resignation, as presented at the commencement of his term of office, are thereby sarcastically made to appear those upon which his administration of the affairs of the colony were conducted. The paper was widely sought and read, being printed twice in *The Public Advertiser*, in which it first appeared, and widely copied, also, into other journals. Dr. Franklin, in a letter to his son, remarks concerning it, "Such papers may seem to have a tendency to increase our divisions; but I intend a contrary effect, and hope, by comprising in a little room, and setting in a strong light, the grievances of the colonies, more attention will be paid to them by our administration, and that, when their unreasonableness is generally seen, some of them will be removed, to the restoration of harmony between us."

"An ancient sage valued himself upon this, that though he could not fiddle, he knew how to make a great city of a little one. The science that I, a modern simpleton, am about to communicate, is the very reverse.

"I address myself to all ministers who have the management of extensive dominions, which from their very greatness have become troublesome to govern, because the multiplicity of their affairs leaves no time for fiddling.

"1. In the first place, gentlemen, you are to consider, that a great empire, like a great cake, is most



easily diminished at the edges. Turn your attention, therefore, first to your *remotest* provinces, that, as you get rid of them, the next may follow in order.

“2. That the possibility of this separation may always exist, take special care the provinces are *never incorporated with the mother country*; that they do not enjoy the same common rights, the same privileges in commerce; and that they are governed by severer laws, all of your own enacting, without allowing them any share in the choice of the legislators. By carefully making and preserving such distinctions, you will (to keep my simile of the cake) act like a wise gingerbread-baker, who, to facilitate a division, cuts his dough half through in those places where, when baked, he would have it broken to pieces.

“3. Those remote provinces have perhaps been acquired, purchased, or conquered, at the sole expense of the settlers or their ancestors, without the aid of the mother country. If this should happen to increase her strength, by their growing numbers, ready to join in her wars; her commerce, by their growing demand for her manufactures; or her naval power, by greater employment for her ships and seamen, they may probably suppose some merit in this, and that it entitles them to some favor; you are therefore to *forget it all, or resent it*, as if they had done you injury. If they happen to be zealous Whigs, friends of liberty, nurtured in revolution principles, remember all that to their prejudice, and contrive to punish it; for such principles, after a revolution is

thoroughly established, are of no more use ; they are even odious and abominable.

“ 4. However peaceably your colonies have submitted to your government, shown their affection to your interests, and patiently borne their grievances ; you are to suppose them *always inclined to revolt*, and treat them accordingly. Quarter troops among them, who by their insolence may provoke the rising of mobs, and by their bullets and bayonets suppress them. By this means, like the husband who uses his wife ill from suspicion, you may in time convert your suspicions into realities.

“ 5. Remote provinces must have governors and judges, to represent the royal person, and execute every where the delegated parts of his office and authority. You ministers know that much of the strength of government depends on the opinion of the people, and much of that opinion on the *choice of rulers* placed immediately over them. If you send them wise and good men for governors, who study the interest of the colonists, and advance their prosperity, they will think their king wise and good, and that he wishes the welfare of his subjects. If you send them learned and upright men for judges, they will think him a lover of justice. This may attach your provinces more to his government. You are therefore to be careful whom you recommend to those offices. If you can find prodigals who have ruined their fortunes, broken gamesters, or stock-jobbers, these may do well as governors ; for they will probably be rapacious, and provoke the people

by their extortions. Wrangling proctors and pettifogging lawyers, too, are not amiss; for they will be forever disputing and quarreling with their little Parliaments. If, withal, they should be ignorant, wrongheaded, and insolent, so much the better. Attorney's clerks and Newgate solicitors will do for chief justices, especially if they hold their places during your pleasure; and all will contribute to impress those ideas of your government that are proper for a people you would wish to renounce it.

“6. To confirm these impressions, and strike them deeper, whenever the injured come to the capital with complaints of mal-administration, oppression, or injustice, *punish such suitors* with long delay, enormous expense, and a final judgment in favor of the oppressor. This will have an admirable effect every way. The trouble of future complaints will be prevented, and governors and judges will be encouraged to further acts of oppression and injustice; and thence the people may become more disaffected, and at length desperate.

“7. When such governors have crammed their coffers, and made themselves so odious to the people that they can no longer remain among them with safety to their persons, *recall and reward* them with pensions. You may make them baronets, too, if that respectable order should not think fit to resent it. All will contribute to encourage new governors in the same practice, and make the supreme government detestable.

“8. If, when you are engaged in war, your colonies



should vie in liberal aids of men and money against the common enemy, upon your simple requisition, and give far beyond their abilities, reflect that a penny taken from them by your power is more honorable to you than a pound presented by their benevolence; *despise, therefore, their voluntary grants*, and resolve to harass them with *novel taxes*. They will probably complain to your Parliament that they are taxed by a body in which they have no representative, and that this is contrary to common right. They will petition for redress. Let the Parliament flout their claims, reject their petitions, refuse even to suffer the reading of them, and treat the petitioners with the utmost contempt. Nothing can have a better effect in producing the alienation proposed; for, though many can forgive injuries, none ever forgave contempt.

“9. In laying these taxes, *never regard the heavy burdens* those remote people already undergo in defending their own frontiers, supporting their own provincial government, making new roads, building bridges, churches, and other public edifices, which in old countries have been done to your hands by your ancestors, but which occasion constant calls and demands on the purses of a new people. Forget the restraint you lay on their trade for your own benefit, and the advantage a monopoly of this trade gives your exacting merchants. Think nothing of the wealth those merchants and your manufacturers acquire by the colony commerce; their increased ability thereby to pay taxes at home; their accumu-

lating, in the price of their commodities, most of those taxes, and so levying them from their consuming customers ; all this, and the employment and support of thousands of your poor by the colonists, you are entirely to forget. But remember to make your arbitrary tax more grievous to your provinces by public declarations importing that your power of taxing them has *no limits* ; so that, when you take from them without their consent a shilling in the pound, you have a clear right to the other nineteen. This will probably weaken every idea of security in their property, and convince them that, under such a government, they have nothing they can call their own, which can scarce fail of producing the happiest consequences !

“10. Possibly, indeed, some of them might still comfort themselves, and say, ‘Though we have no property, we have yet something left that is valuable ; we have constitutional *liberty, both of person and of conscience*. This King, these Lords, and these Commons, who, it seems, are too remote from us to know us and feel for us, can not take from us our Habeas Corpus right, or our right of trial by a jury of our neighbors ; they can not deprive us of the exercise of our religion, alter our ecclesiastical constitution, and compel us to be Papists, if they please, or Mohammedans.’ To annihilate this comfort, begin by laws to perplex their commerce with infinite regulations, impossible to be remembered and observed ; ordain seizures of their property for every failure ; take away the trial of such property by jury, and

give it to arbitrary judges of your own appointing, and of the lowest characters in the country, whose salaries and emoluments are to arise out of the duties or condemnations, and whose appointments are during pleasure. Then let there be a formal declaration of both Houses that opposition to your edicts is treason, and that persons suspected of treason in the provinces may, according to some obsolete law, be seized and sent to the metropolis of the empire for trial, and pass an act that those there charged with certain other offenses shall be sent away in chains from their friends and country to be tried in the same manner for felony. Then erect a new court of Inquisition among them, accompanied by an armed force, with instructions to transport all such suspected persons; to be ruined by the expense if they bring over evidences to prove their innocence, or be found guilty and hanged if they can not afford it. And, lest the people should think you can not possibly go any further, pass another solemn declaratory act, ‘that King, Lords, and Commons had, have, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the unrepresented provinces *in all cases whatsoever*.’ This will include spiritual with temporal, and, taken together, must operate wonderfully to your purpose, by convincing them that they are, at present, under a power something like that spoken of in the Scriptures, which can not only kill their bodies, but damn their souls to all eternity, by compelling them, if it pleases, to worship the devil.



“ 11. To make your taxes more odious, and more likely to procure resistance, send from the capital a *board of officers* to superintend the collection, *composed of the most indiscreet*, ill-bred, and insolent you can find. Let these have large salaries out of the extorted revenue, and live in open, grating luxury upon the sweat and blood of the industrious, whom they are to worry continually with groundless and expensive prosecutions before the above-mentioned arbitrary revenue judges; all at the cost of the party prosecuted, though acquitted, because the king is to pay no costs. Let these men, by your order, be exempted from all the common taxes and burdens of the province, though they and their property are protected by its laws. If any revenue officers are suspected of the least tenderness for the people, discard them. If others are justly complained of, protect and reward them. If any of the under officers behave so as to provoke the people to drub them, promote those to better offices; this will encourage others to procure for themselves such profitable drubbings, by multiplying and enlarging such provocations, and all will work toward the end you aim at.

“ 12. Another way to make your tax odious is to *misapply the produce of it*. If it was originally appropriated for the defense of the provinces, and the better support of government, and the administration of justice, where it may be necessary, then apply none of it to that defense, but bestow it where it is not necessary in augmenting salaries or pensions

to every governor who has distinguished himself by his enmity to the people, and by calumniating them to their sovereign. This will make them pay it more unwillingly, and be more apt to quarrel with those that collect it and those that imposed it, who will quarrel again with them, and all shall contribute to your own purpose of making them weary of your government.

“ 13. If the people of any province have been accustomed to *support their own governors and judges* to satisfaction, you are to apprehend that such governors and judges may be thereby influenced to treat the people kindly, and to do them justice. This is another reason for applying part of that revenue in larger salaries to such governors and judges, given, as their commissions are, during *your* pleasure only ; forbidding them to take any salaries from their provinces, that thus the people may no longer hope any kindness from their governors, or (in crown cases) any justice from their judges. And, as the money thus misapplied in one province is extorted from all, probably all will resent the misapplication.

“ 14. If the Parliaments of your provinces should dare to claim rights, or complain of your administration, order them to be harassed with *repeated dissolutions*. If the same men are continually returned by new elections, adjourn their meetings to some country village where they can not be accommodated, and here keep them during pleasure ; for this, you know, is your prerogative, and an excellent one it is, as you may manage it to promote discontents

among the people, diminish their respect, and increase their disaffection.

“15. Convert the brave, honest officers of your *navy* into pimping tide-waiters and colony officers of the *customs*. Let those who in time of war fought gallantly in defense of the commerce of their countrymen, in peace be taught to prey upon it. Let them learn to be corrupted by great and real smugglers; but (to show their diligence) scour with armed boats every bay, harbor, river, creek, cove, or nook throughout the coast of your colonies; stop and detain every coaster, every wood-boat, every fisherman; tumble their cargoes, and even their ballast, inside out and upside down, and, if a pennyworth of pins is found unentered, let the whole be seized and confiscated. Thus shall the trade of your colonists suffer more from their friends in time of peace than it did from their enemies in war. 'Then let those boats' crews land upon every farm in their way, rob their orchards, steal their pigs and poultry, and insult the inhabitants. If the injured and exasperated farmers, unable to procure other justice, should attack the aggressors, drub them, and burn their boats, you are to call this *high treason and rebellion*, order fleets and armies into their country, and threaten to carry all the offenders three thousand miles to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Oh! this will work admirably!

“16. If you are told of *discontents* in your colonies, never believe that they are general, or that you have given occasion for them; therefore do not think



of applying any remedy, or of changing any offensive measure. Redress no grievance, lest they should be encouraged to demand the redress of some other grievance. Grant no request that is just and reasonable, lest they should make another that is unreasonable. Take all your informations of the state of the colonies from your governors and officers in enmity with them. Encourage and reward these leasing-makers; secrete their lying accusations, lest they should be confuted; but act upon them as the clearest evidence, and believe nothing you hear from the friends of the people. Suppose all *their* complaints to be invented and promoted by a few factious demagogues, whom if you could catch and hang all would be quiet. Catch and hang a few of them accordingly, and the blood of the martyrs shall work miracles in favor of your purpose.

“17. If you see *rival nations* rejoicing at the prospect of your disunion with your provinces, and endeavoring to promote it; if they translate, publish, and applaud all the complaints of your discontented colonists, at the same time privately stimulating you to severer measures, let not that offend you. Why should it, since you all mean the same thing?

“18. If any colony should, *at their own charge*, erect a fortress to secure their *port* against the fleets of a foreign enemy, get your governor to betray that fortress into your hands. Never think of paying what it cost the country, for that would look, at least, like some regard for justice; but turn it into a cita-

del to awe the inhabitants and curb their commerce. If they should have lodged in such fortress the very arms they bought and used to aid you in your conquests, seize them all; it will provoke, like ingratitude added to robbery. One admirable effect of these operations will be, to discourage every other colony from erecting such defenses, and so their and your enemies may more easily invade them, to the great disgrace of your government, and, of course, the furtherance of your project.

“19. Send armies into their country under pretense of protecting the inhabitants; but, instead of garrisoning the forts on their frontiers with those troops to prevent incursions, demolish those forts and order those troops into the heart of the country, that the savages may be encouraged to attack the frontiers, and that the troops may be protected by the inhabitants. This will seem to proceed from your *ill will or your ignorance*, and contribute further to produce and strengthen an opinion among them that you are no longer fit to govern them.

“20. Lastly, invest the *general of your army in the provinces* with great and unconstitutional powers, and free him from the control of even your own civil governors. Let him have troops enough under his command, with all the fortresses in his possession, and who knows but (like some provincial generals in the Roman Empire, and encouraged by the universal discontent you have produced) he may take it into his head to set up for himself? If he should, and you have carefully practiced the few ex

cellent rules of mine, take my word for it, all the provinces will immediately join him, and you will that day (if you have not done it sooner) get rid of the trouble of governing them, and all the plagues attending their commerce and connection from thenceforth and forever.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

ABOUT this period, 1768, there were several rumors concerning proposed appointments to be tendered to Dr. Franklin, which resulted in nothing, however, except the giving of new pretexts for accusation to his enemies. It was said that he was to be appointed under secretary to Lord Hillsborough, and that nobleman's first deportment toward him gave color to the report. How widely they afterward separated we have seen. There was a proposal made to him, also, of transferring him from the office of postmaster-general of the colonies to some station under the government; and there appeared at one time so much probability of such a change, that it became a serious matter of debate with Dr. Franklin what would be the best course for him to take in the matter. There is no evidence, however, that he was ever put to the necessity of returning any positive answer to the overtures of the government. He was probably sounded, and as, by his course after the appointment of his son to the government of New Jersey, and by his openly declared opinions, it appeared that he was not a man to be silenced by patronage, the plan of his purchase was abandoned. His famous letter to Lord Kames, which that nobleman never received, and which was probably in the

possession of the British government at this time, may have had its influence. In that letter, written in 1767, is contained an epitome of the opinions, arguments, predictions, and views of Dr. Franklin, with which the reader is already familiar. There was also something said of procuring his appointment as governor of Massachusetts; and his friends in Pennsylvania, who were looking forward to the change of that government from a proprietary to a royal, also thought of Franklin as governor under the new order of things. But he saw the difficulties in the way of his accepting any royal appointment, and had fully determined to decline had it been offered him. He could not accept the government of a colony with such instructions as he knew, in pursuance of the ministerial policy, must accompany it. The change in the government of Pennsylvania never took place, nor did the ministry think Franklin a suitable person to succeed Governor Bernard of Massachusetts.

Other public business, however, crowded upon him. In 1768 he was appointed agent for Georgia. In 1769 he was chosen agent for New Jersey. In 1770 Massachusetts paid a similar compliment to his sagacity and patriotism. His Pennsylvania agency was continued, and thus, at the well-advanced age of sixty-four, he had the agency of four colonies, in each of which circumstances of peculiar difficulty and embarrassment required the full exercise of his wisdom and prudence. Thus, though anxious to return home, and feeling that his private affairs need-

ed his attention, he was detained abroad by the confidence of his countrymen, which, while it must naturally and properly have gratified his self-love, imposed most arduous duties upon him. And his performance of these was not limited to any mere official routine. He was influenced by higher considerations than the literal compliance with instructions. "Being," he writes to a friend, "born and bred in one of the countries now at variance, and having lived long, and made many agreeable connections of friendship in the other, I wish all prosperity to both ; but I have talked and written so much and so long on the subject, that my acquaintance are weary of hearing, and the public of reading any more of it, which begins to make me weary of talking and writing, especially as I do not find I have gained any point in either country except that of rendering myself suspected by my impartiality, in England of being too much an American, and in America of being too much an Englishman."

But, as events ripened, that he was too much an American for the purposes of the English ministry became more than a point of mere suspicion. As he perceived unmistakable indications that the moderation for which he had so earnestly contended was likely to be of little avail, and that ministers were resolved to persist in their plan of coercion, the tone of his correspondence with his American friends grew more like the language which he had at an early period disapproved of in the newspapers. Many of his letters were written to friends in Massachu-



setts, particularly to the Rev. Dr. Samuel Cooper, who was an active advocate for popular rights and the cause of the colonies. In a letter to Dr. Cooper, dated April, 1769, he says: "The Parliament remain fixed in their resolution not to repeal the duty acts this session, and will rise next Tuesday. I hope my country folks will remain as fixed in their resolutions of industry and frugality till these acts are repealed; and if I could be sure of that, I should almost wish them never to be repealed, being persuaded that we shall reap more solid and extensive advantages from the steady practice of those two great virtues, than we can possibly suffer damage from all the duties the Parliament of this kingdom can levy on us. They flatter themselves you can not long subsist without their manufactures. They believe you have not virtue enough to persist in such agreements. They imagine the colonies will differ among themselves, deceive and desert one another, and quietly, one after the other, submit to the yoke, and return to the use of British fineries. They think that, though the men may be contented with home-spun stuffs, the women will never get the better of their vanity and fondness for English modes and gewgaws. The ministerial people all talk in this strain, and even many of the merchants. I have ventured to assert that they will all find themselves mistaken; and I rely so much on the spirit of my country as to be confident I shall not be found a false prophet, though at present not believed. \* \* \*

The advantages of your perseverance in industry

and frugality will be great and permanent. Your debts will be paid, your farms will be better improved and yield a greater produce, your real wealth will increase in a plenty of every useful home production, and all the true enjoyments of life, even though no foreign trade should be allowed you, and this handicraft shop-keeping state will, for its own sake, learn to behave more civilly to its customers." It is a little amusing to note, in the last sentence, the application of epithets to England which were in substance afterward repeated by Napoleon. Franklin wrote in the same strain of encouragement to others, individuals, committees, and public bodies. The measures which he once thought and said would be better carried in silence than with the parade of meetings, resolutions, and associations, he now perceived could be best promoted by the very steps which he had, at first, hesitated to approve. And as Dr. Franklin's plans and views were eminently practical, he took a great interest in the silk culture, suggesting to his correspondents in America the probability of exchanging raw silk for manufactures in England, and thus making the colonies independent of British manufactures, by supplying a commodity in exchange much easier obtained than specie. "When once," he says, "you can raise plenty of silk, you may have manufactures enough from hence." And the experiment was very successfully prosecuted until the Revolutionary troubles put a period to the culture.

In April, 1770, Parliament altered the revenue

law, but in such a manner as to make it more offensive to the thinking than before. The duties were removed on all articles except tea, in the expectation that motives of self-interest would draw the colonists into trade again, and thus enrich the British merchants and manufacturers, while the retention of the duty on one article would defend and maintain the principle which was in dispute. Meanwhile, a tragical affair had occurred in Boston, in the collision between the people and the troops quartered in that town for the enforcement of the measures of the ministry. This event, commonly called the Boston Massacre, took place on the 5th of March. Through the winter the discipline of the soldiers had been relaxed, and they were permitted to wander, in parties and singly, about the streets. Frequent disputes occurred between them and the citizens; the soldiers were accused of insolence to the people, and some of them were rude in their deportment toward respectable females. At any time, or for any cause, the presence of a standing army in Boston would have been a sore grievance; but in the events of the times, there were incidents which led to direct collision.

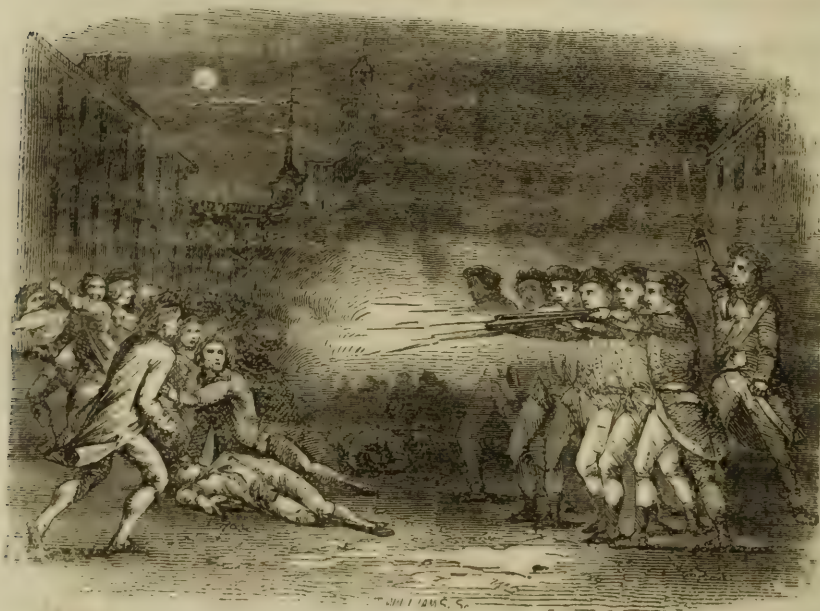
Governor Bernard had sailed for England. The people, stung by his arbitrary measures in delaying and refusing to convene the "General Court," as the Legislature of that province was styled, and more than suspicious that he was acting against the people in person in Great Britain, as he had strongly accused them in his correspondence, were in a condition of great exasperation. The citizens renewed



their non-importation agreement, and, as some of the merchants persisted in importing British goods, they became highly obnoxious to the people, many of whom resorted to strong methods of testifying their dislike. The boys partook of the spirit of the time, and bore about the streets effigies of the importing merchants. A notorious spy, or informer, became entangled in an affray with certain of these boys, who followed him to his house with abusive epithets. They threw snow and ice against the building; he fired from the window, and killed one of the lads. The excitement produced by this event was intense; the funeral of the boy was attended by an immense concourse of people, and the state of public feeling which it engendered led to continual affrays between the soldiers and the populace; all, however, without the use of any other arms on either side than bludgeons, stones, ice, and other impromptu missiles. In most of these encounters, as is usually the case in such affairs between soldiers and citizens, the latter were victorious.

On the night of the 5th of March, a sentinel was assaulted on his post, near the Custom-house, with ice and snow. As recent events had exasperated the people, and many were in the streets from a fire-alarm, a great crowd pressed upon the point where the collision occurred. A sergeant and six men were dispatched to the relief of the sentinel, and were received with missiles by the crowd. The captain of the guard, who had followed, ordered them to charge; the people, unintimidated, persisted in

throwing ice; some person gave the word "fire!" and the soldiers discharged their pieces, killing three of the crowd outright, and wounding two mortally



and several slightly. The soldiers were shortly after withdrawn from the town to the castle, on an island in the harbor. The guard had a fair and impartial trial, and were acquitted; and the people acquiesced in the legal justice of the verdict.

These events, the presence of Governor Bernard in England, and copies of the letters of Franklin to his correspondents in America, which had been surreptitiously procured, all operated against the indefatigable friend of his countrymen. It was his fortune to be held in some measure accountable for all that transpired in the colonies in opposition to the ministry. Intimations were made to him that he would be dispossessed of his office of postmaster



general. He still retained his office, though efforts were made, as he suspected, to provoke him to a resignation: a step which he considered would have been a forfeiture of his self-respect, and an admission of a point which he stoutly denied, *to wit*, that he had in any way compromised his loyalty, or interfered with his duty as postmaster, in performing that which he owed to his country. He maintained his right to discuss the measures of the ministry, and sought neither to deny nor to conceal his sentiments.

In his autobiography Dr. Franklin refers with gratification to a sort of prophecy of his father's, that he should stand before kings, which was more than fulfilled by his standing before six and dining with one, the King of Denmark, in London; and in a letter to his friend Thomas Cushing, speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, the doctor, then 65 years of age, speaks with the gratification of an old man of the honor paid him in 1771 by the Irish Parliament. He had just returned from a tour in Scotland and Ireland, and was describing some of the occurrences. "Before leaving Ireland, I must mention that, being desirous of seeing some of the principal patriots there, I stayed till the opening of their Parliament. I found them disposed to be friends of America, in which I endeavored to confirm them, with the expectation that our growing weight might in time be thrown into their scale, and, by joining our interests with theirs, a more equitable treatment from this nation might be obtained for them as well as for us. There are many brave



spirits among them. The gentry are a very sensible, polite, and friendly people. Their Parliament makes a most respectable figure, with a number of very respectable speakers in both parties, and able men of business. And I must not omit acquainting you that, it being a standing rule to admit members of the English Parliament to sit (though they do not vote) in the House among the members, my fellow-traveler, being an English member, was accordingly admitted as such ; but I supposed I must go to the gallery, when the speaker stood up and acquainted the House that he understood there was in town an American gentleman of (as he was pleased to say) distinguished character and merit, a member or delegate of some of the Parliaments of that country, who was desirous of being present at the debates of the House ; that there was a rule of the House for admitting members of English Parliaments, and that he supposed the House would consider the American Assemblies as English Parliaments ; but as this was the first instance, he had chosen not to give any order in it without first receiving their directions. On the question, the House gave a loud, unanimous *Ay*, when two members came without the bar, led me in between them, and placed me honorably and commodiously."

Such a reception in Ireland must have been exceedingly gratifying to him at a time when the "lying representations," as he strongly terms them, of Governor Bernard, identifying him with the Massachusetts disturbances, made his treatment by the official

personages in London any thing but courteous. He had been grievously insulted by Lord Hillsborough, as we have already seen, and certain of the newspapers were, or had been, in full cry against him. In the respite from public labors and official discomforts which he enjoyed during this tour through Ireland and Scotland, the sympathy and warm-heartedness of the Irish patriots were not the only circumstances which gave him comfort and solace. He found his old Scottish friends, with some new ones, ready to receive him with open arms, and spent several weeks in the enjoyment of the society of men, most of whom had no particular political sympathy with him, while their esteem for him as a man and as a philosopher, or, in other words, their personal regard, made their intercourse with him most delightful.

In this year (1771) Dr. Franklin paid two visits to Jonathan Shipley, bishop of St. Asaph's—the "good bishop," as he styled him. To this prelate Dr. Franklin was indebted for some of the attention which he received in Ireland, being furnished with letters to gentlemen in that country. As an evidence of the continual remembrance of his family, we extract the following from a letter to his wife, written August 14th, 1771. The last clause of the extract is amusingly characteristic: "I spent three weeks in Hampshire at my friend the Bishop of St. Asaph's. The bishop's lady knows what children and grandchildren I have, and their ages; so, when I was to come away on Monday, the 12th, in the

morning, she insisted on my staying that one day longer, that we might together keep my grandson's birth-day. At dinner, among other nice things, we had a floating island, which they always particularly have on the birth-days of any of their own six children, who were all but one at table, where there was also a clergyman's widow, now above one hundred years old. The chief toast of the day was Master Benjamin Bache, which the venerable old lady began in a bumper of *mountain*. The bishop's lady politely added, 'and that he may be as good a man as his grandfather.' I said I hoped he would be *much* better. The bishop, still more complaisant than his lady, said, 'We will compound the matter, and be content if he should not prove *quite so good*.' 'This chit-chat is to yourself only, in return for some of yours about your grandson, and must only be read to Sally, and not spoken of to any body else; for you know how people add and alter silly stories that they hear, and make them appear ten times more silly.'

In the letter to his wife which contained the above, he inclosed also a letter just received from the bishop. Sure that his wife could not help but hear what was said to his disadvantage, he was ever kindly anxious that she should know what pleasant events he encountered, and what good and great men gave him their countenance. It was during his visit to the bishop that he commenced his autobiography, and it is not at all improbable that the partiality and kindness of this hospitable family aided no little in



putting him in the good humor with himself which runs so pleasantly through that performance.

The embarrassments which attended the transaction of American business, and his increasing infirmities of age, again pressed upon Franklin the expediency of returning home, and he expressed the desire very strongly in his letters written in 1772. But his correspondents in America urged him to remain, and in this year the Massachusetts affairs again engaged his attention. In this year, too, he was occupied with the Walpole Grant and with Lord Hillsborough, whose resignation took place about the middle of the year; and the appointment of Lord Dartmouth put matters on a better footing, as the regulations respecting agents, established by Lord Hillsborough, were set aside. It has been supposed that the influence of Dr. Franklin had some weight in the appointment of Lord Dartmouth. That nobleman was an opponent of the Stamp Act, and from his general principles was supposed to be favorable to the interests of the colonies. It is said that Franklin was sounded while the successorship to Lord Hillsborough was mooted, and that he mentioned Lord Dartmouth as one who would be acceptable to the Americans. And the change was found generally very acceptable.

Dr. Franklin's first official business with Lord Dartmouth was the presentation of a petition from the Massachusetts Legislature, remonstrating against the payment of the governor's and judges' salaries by the crown. Under advice from Dartmouth, whose

good-will to the provinces was not, at this time, questioned, and who, perhaps, would never have been supposed to entertain any other feelings if the committal of the ministry to a bad policy had not compelled him to act against his former opinions, Franklin consented that the presentation of the petition should be delayed. Meanwhile, orders were dispatched to America, by which the salaries of the governor and judges were to be paid from the customs. The Legislature tendered the governor his salary, and he declined receiving it; but he asked that the Province House in Boston might be repaired for his residence. The Legislature replied that, as he chose to be supported by the British government, they did not feel obliged to be at any expense for his accommodation.

In the autumn of 1772, two meetings were held by the citizens of Boston in relation to this subject of salaries. Messages desiring information were sent to Governor Hutchinson, which he declined to answer, refusing to recognize the meeting, and branding it as an "unlawful assembly." He was then desired to convene the General Court, which he refused to do. A committee was appointed to make a report at a subsequent meeting; and this report, a most able document, was adopted in Boston, and dispatched with circular letters to other towns in the province. In most of the towns the sentiments of the "Statement of Rights" were cordially responded to, and all the efforts of the friends of the governor to awe and cajole the people into silence were inef-

fectual. James Otis and Samuel Adams were members of the committee who framed this report. Although Governor Hutchinson, in his history, says "the materials of the report were prepared for them in England by their *great director*, whose advice they followed, and in whose wisdom and dexterity they had implicit faith," yet it is hardly to be supposed that the Otises, Adamses, and other leading patriots of New England needed to apply for materials even to Dr. Franklin. The legislative proceedings of that period, and the columns of the public press, give evidences of union, and strength, and of political wisdom, which indicated no dearth of ability in the province. Dr. Franklin caused the proceedings of the Bostonians to be republished in London, with a temperate preface prefixed by himself. Of course it was published anonymously. In this case the matter of the pamphlet needed no one to call attention to it, and Dr. Franklin's efforts were directed rather to obtain a fair hearing than to bespeak readers.

Little occurred in 1772-3 except what tended to show that little more was to be hoped from the ministry of Lord Dartmouth than from that of Lord Hillsborough, except in the cheap article of civility. Ministers were determined to persist in their policy, and defend "the dignity of Parliament." At this period Dr. Franklin published the "Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One," which we have already quoted, as also the following, which even exceeds the other in point and humor. It purports to be "An Edict by the King of Prussia:"



“ Dantzic, September 5th, 1773.

“ WE have long wondered here at the supineness of the English nation under the Prussian impositions upon its trade entering our port. We did not, till lately, know the claims, ancient and modern, that hang over that nation, and therefore could not suspect that it might submit to those impositions from a sense of duty or from principles of equity. The following Edict, just made public, may, if serious, throw some light upon this matter.

“ ‘ FREDERIC, by the grace of God, King of Prussia, &c., &c., &c., to all present and to come (*à tous présens et à venir*), health. The peace now enjoyed throughout our dominions having afforded us leisure to apply ourselves to the regulation of commerce, the improvement of our finances, and, at the same time, the easing our *domestic* subjects in their taxes; for these causes, and other good considerations us thereunto moving, we hereby make known, that, after having deliberated these affairs in our council, present our dear brothers and other great officers of the state, members of the same, we, of our certain knowledge, full power, and authority royal, have made and issued this present Edict, viz.:

“ ‘ Whereas it is well known to all the world that the first German settlements made in the Island of Britain were by colonies of people subject to our renowned ducal ancestors, and drawn from their dominions under the conduct of Hengist, Horsa, Hella, Uffa, Cerdicus, Ida, and others; and that the said colonies have flourished under the protection of our

august house for ages past; have never been emancipated therefrom, and yet have hitherto yielded little profit to the same; and whereas we ourself have in the last war fought for and defended the said colonies against the power of France, and thereby enabled them to make conquests from the said power in America, for which we have not yet received adequate compensation; and whereas it is just and expedient that a revenue should be raised from the said colonies in Britain toward our indemnification, and that those who are descendants of our ancient subjects, and thence still owe us due obedience, should contribute to the replenishing of our royal coffers (as they must have done had their ancestors remained in the territories now to us appertaining), we do therefore hereby ordain and command, that from and after the date of these presents, there shall be levied and paid to our officers of the *customs*, on all goods, wares, and merchandises, and on all grain and other produce of the earth, exported from the said Island of Britain, and on all goods of whatever kind imported into the same, a duty of four and a half per cent. *ad valorem*, for the use of us and our successors. And, that the said duty may more effectually be collected, we do hereby ordain that all ships or vessels bound from Great Britain to any other part of the world, or from any other part of the world to Great Britain, shall in their respective voyages, touch at our port of Koningsberg, there to be unladen, searched, and charged with the said duties.

“ And whereas there hath been from time to time

discovered in the said Island of Great Britain, by our colonists there, many mines or beds of iron-stone; and sundry subjects of our ancient dominion, skillful in converting the said stone into metal, have in time past transported themselves thither, carrying with them and communicating that art; and the inhabitants of the said island, presuming that they had a natural right to make the best use they could of the natural productions of their country for their own benefit, have not only built furnaces for smelting the said stone into iron, but have erected plating-forges, slitting-mills, and steel-furnaces, for the more convenient manufacturing of the same, thereby endangering a diminution of the said manufacture in our ancient dominion: We do, therefore, farther ordain, that from and after the date hereof, no mill or other engine for slitting or rolling of iron, or any plating-forge to work with a tilt-hammer, or any furnace for making steel, shall be erected or continued in the said Island of Great Britain. And the lord-lieutenant of every county in the said island is hereby commanded, on information of any such erection within his county, to order, and by force to cause, the same to be abated and destroyed, as he shall answer the neglect thereof to us at his peril. But we are nevertheless graciously pleased to permit the inhabitants of the said island to transport their iron into Prussia, there to be manufactured, and to them returned, they paying our Prussian subjects for the workmanship, with all the costs of commission, freight, and risk, coming and returning, any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding



“We do not, however, think fit to extend this our indulgence to the article of *wool*; but, meaning to encourage not only the manufacturing of woolen cloth, but also the raising of wool in our ancient dominions, and to prevent both, as much as may be, in our said island, we do hereby absolutely forbid the transportation of wool from thence, even to the mother country, Prussia; and, that those islanders may be further and more effectually restrained in making any advantage of their own wool in the way of manufacture, we command that none shall be carried out of one county into another; nor shall any worsted, bay, or woolen yarn, cloth, says, bays, kerseys, serges, frizes, druggets, cloth-serges, shalloons, or any other drapery stuffs, or woolen manufactures whatsoever, made up or mixed with wool, in any of the said counties, be carried into any other county, or be water-borne even across the smallest river or creek, on penalty of forfeiture of the same, together with the boats, carriages, horses, &c., that shall be employed in removing them. Nevertheless, our loving subjects there are hereby permitted (if they think proper) to use all their wool as manure for the improvement of their lands.

“And whereas the art and mystery of making *hats* hath arrived at great perfection in Prussia, and the making of hats by our remoter subjects ought to be as much as possible restrained; and forasmuch as the islanders before mentioned, being in possession of wool, beaver, and other furs, have presumptuously conceived they had a right to make some

advantage thereof, by manufacturing the same into hats, to the prejudice of our domestic manufacture, we do, therefore, hereby strictly command and ordain, that no hats or felts whatsoever, dyed or undyed, finished or unfinished, shall be loaded or put into or upon any vessel, cart, carriage, or horse, to be transported or conveyed out of one county in the said island into another county, or to any other place whatsoever, by any person or persons whatsoever, on pain of forfeiting the same, with a penalty of five hundred pounds sterling for every offense; nor shall any hat-maker, in any of the said counties, employ more than two apprentices, on penalty of five pounds sterling per month; we intending hereby, that such hat-makers, being so restrained both in the production and sale of their commodity, may find no advantage in continuing their business. But, lest the said islanders should suffer inconvenience by the want of hats, we are further graciously pleased to permit them to send their beaver furs to Prussia, and we also permit hats made thereof to be exported from Prussia to Britain, the people thus favored to pay all costs and charges of manufacturing, interest, commission to our merchants, insurance, and freight going and returning, as in the case of iron.

“‘ And, lastly, being willing further to favor our said colonies in Britain, we do hereby also ordain and command, that all the *thieves*, highway and street robbers, housebreakers, forgerers, murderers, s—d—tes, and villains of every denomination, who have forfeited their lives to the law in Prussia, but

whom we, in our great clemency, do not think fit here to hang, shall be emptied out of our jails into the said Island of Great Britain, for the better peopling of that country.

“ ‘We flatter ourselves that these our royal regulations and commands will be thought *just and reasonable* by our much-favored colonists in England, the said regulations being copied from their statutes of 10th and 11th William III., c. 10; 5th George II., c. 22; 23d George II., c. 29; 4th George I., c. 11, and from other equitable laws made by their Parliaments, or from instructions given by their princes, or from resolutions of both Houses, entered into for the good government of their *own colonies in Ireland and America*.

“ ‘And all persons in the said island are hereby cautioned not to oppose in any wise the execution of this our Edict, or any part thereof, such opposition being high treason, of which all who are suspected shall be transported in fetters from Britain to Prussia, there to be tried and executed according to the Prussian law.

“ ‘Such is our pleasure.

“ ‘Given at Potsdam, this twenty-fifth day of the month of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, and in the thirty-third year of our reign.

“ ‘By the king, in his council.

“ ‘RECHTMAESSIG, *Sec.*’

“ ‘Some take this Edict to be merely one of the



king's *jeux d'esprit* ; others suppose it serious, and that he means a quarrel with England ; but all here think the assertion it concludes with, ' that these regulations are copied from acts of the English Parliament respecting their colonies,' a very injurious one, it being impossible to believe that a people distinguished for their love of liberty, a nation so wise, so liberal in its sentiments, so just and equitable toward its neighbors, should, from mean and injudicious views of petty immediate profit, treat its own children in a manner so arbitrary and tyrannical !"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

IN February, 1774, Dr. Franklin was dismissed from his office of postmaster-general for the colonies. This measure, designed by the ministry to effect the ruin of his influence and character, was so timed that its occurrence was not merely the mark of political disapproval: it was aimed at his personal integrity; for it followed upon a report of the privy council, in such a way that it would appear that the result of a hearing by that board was the establishment of the fact that Benjamin Franklin, by abuse of confidence and other knavish proceedings, had shown himself unworthy of trust. The event, however, was, even in England, the reverse of what his enemies counted upon. Detraction might, by more silent and quiet measures, have injured his fame; but this open and summary persecution caused the public to investigate circumstances to which it might otherwise have been indifferent, and the character of Franklin stood higher than before. In America his dismissal from his office proved the most fortunate event for him that his friends could have desired. It relieved him at once from his anomalous position as the holder of office under the British government, and removed the suspicion that his enemies entertained and encouraged, that he was

playing a double part. Upon the reception of the news, Dr. Rush wrote thus to Arthur Lee: "Dr. Franklin is a very popular character in every part of America. He will be received and carried in triumph to his house when he arrives among us. It is to be hoped that he will not consent to hold any more offices under government. No step but this can prevent his being handed down to posterity among the first and greatest characters in the world."

The circumstances which preceded the removal of Dr. Franklin from the post-office were as follows: In the latter part of the year 1772, while in conversation with a gentleman in London who was versed in state affairs, the doctor was informed that all the measures of which he and other Americans complained were not originated in England, but were "projected, proposed to the administration, solicited, and obtained by some of the most respectable among the Americans themselves, as necessary measures for the welfare of that country." In proof of this, the gentleman placed in Franklin's hands a large bundle of original letters from Governor Hutchinson, Lieutenant-governor Oliver, and others, in which the sending of troops and other obnoxious measures were strongly advised. The direction of these letters was erased, but it subsequently appeared that the person to whom they were written was Mr. Thomas Whately, then deceased. Mr. Whately had been a member of Parliament, and at one time secretary under one of the ministers. It is stated that three persons in England only were privy to



this transaction, one of whom was Mr. John Temple. Another is supposed to be Mr. Hartley, a member of Parliament.

Franklin could not, of course, feel it otherwise than his duty to give information of this fact to his constituents; but the gentleman in whose hands the letters were, would not permit copies to be taken. Permission was, however, obtained to transmit the originals to America, under the conditions that they should not be printed, that copies should not be taken, and that they should be carefully returned. Dr. Franklin sent them to Mr. Thomas Cushing, speaker of the House of Representatives, and chairman of the Committee of Correspondence. Mr. Cushing was desirous not to be known publicly in the transaction, and therefore concealed the manner in which they came into his hands, as to mention Dr. Franklin, who was, as agent for the colony, in constant correspondence with himself, would at once have identified him with the matter. One of the first persons in whose hands Mr. Cushing placed the letters was Mr. John Adams, who carried them round with him upon a judicial circuit. Dr. Franklin had authorized him to show them to several gentlemen whom he designated. He afterward wrote to Mr. Cushing that he might even show them to some of the governor's party, and finally took off all restraint except as to copying.

These documents, having been freely circulated, and thus become the topic of universal conversation, came before the Massachusetts House of Represent-

atives in June, 1773. The Assembly sat with closed doors, and heard the letters, copies of which were also produced on the second day for the action of the Legislature. It was *said* that these copies also came from England, but this, of course, was a fiction and an evasion. A long series of resolutions, and a petition drawn up in accordance with them, were adopted by the House of Representatives on the 15th of June. The purport of the resolutions, as summed by Dr. Franklin in his account of the matter, was the expression of the opinion of the Americans that "the grievances which had been so deeply resented as measures of the mother country, were, in fact, the measures of two or three of their own people; of course, all that resentment was withdrawn from her, and fell, where it was proper it should fall, on the heads of those caitiffs who were the authors of the mischief." \* \* \* "It was a solemn declaration, sent over from the province most aggrieved, in which they acquitted Britain of their grievances, and charged them all upon a few individuals in their own country. Upon the heads of these very mischievous men they deprecated no vengeance, though that of the whole nation was justly merited; they considered it as a hard thing for an administration to punish a governor who had acted from orders, though the orders had been procured by his misrepresentations and calumnies; they therefore only petitioned that his majesty would be pleased to remove Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., and Andrew Oliver, Esq., from their posts in the government, and place good and faithful men in their stead."

On the 21st of August, Franklin, as agent for the House of Representatives, sent the petition to Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state for the colonies. Nearly six months intervened between the presentation of the petition and the occurrence of any action upon it. In the mean time, the letters, printed in Boston, reached England, and great curiosity was excited as to who had sent them to America. The gentleman who had handed them to Dr. Franklin had enjoined secrecy on his own account, and so the subject was involved in as much mystery on one side of the Atlantic as the other. The newspapers and the political circles were full of discussion. Though the address was erased from them, it was well understood to whom they were originally written—Mr. Thomas Whately. His brother, Mr. William Whately, into whose hands, as executor, the papers of the deceased had passed, was suspected of having permitted the letters to go out of his hands, and he, in turn, looked to Mr. Temple, a gentleman in the Customs, a friend of his brother's, who had been permitted to examine the papers of the deceased. Mr. Temple, in explicit terms, denied having taken the letters, or any extract from them, from among the documents belonging to the deceased. Anonymous accusations appeared against Mr. Temple, which he thought Mr. Whately should have contradicted, and as he did not, an altercation ensued: Temple challenged Whately on the morning of the 11th of December, and in the afternoon the duel was fought, and Mr. Whately wounded. As Dr. Franklin understood the duel to



be only postponed until Mr. Whately recovered, he interfered, and published a card in the Public Advertiser, in which he declared himself to have been the person who procured and transmitted the letters to America, and that, as they were not among Mr. Thomas Whately's papers when those documents passed into the hands of his brother, Mr. Temple could not have taken them from thence. Dr. Franklin was now blamed for not having prevented the duel; but it is a sufficient vindication of him in this respect, that he knew nothing of it until after it had occurred. He was also attacked for having transmitted the letters to America; but to this he answered, that "they were not of the nature of *private* letters. They were written by public officers to persons in public stations, on public affairs, and intended to promote public measures; they were, therefore, handed to other public persons, who might be influenced by them to produce those measures." It is now understood that Mr. Temple, afterward Sir John Temple, came into possession of the papers before Mr. Whately's death, and that he sent them to Dr. Franklin by the hands of a third person. Dr. Franklin might have known this or not; his card is ambiguous. He says that Mr. Temple could not have taken them from Mr. William Whately, because they were never in that gentleman's possession.

Now Mr. Whately turned upon Dr. Franklin, and commenced a chancery suit against him, founded on the far-fetched declaration that Franklin had print-

ed great numbers of copies of the letters, and he, the complainant, prayed that Franklin might be compelled *to account for the profits*, and discover how he came by the letters, &c. Pending the chancery suit, which appears never to have been carried further than filing the complainant's bill and receiving the respondent's answer, Dr. Franklin was notified that the king had referred the petition of the Assembly to the privy council. On the 11th of January, the doctor accordingly appeared before the council, with Mr. Bollan, the agent for the council of the province of Massachusetts. The evident purpose of this hearing was to make the occasion one of personal attack upon Dr. Franklin. Mr. Israel Maudit petitioned that he might be heard by counsel in behalf of the governor and lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, and Mr. Wedderbern, afterward Lord Loughborough, appeared as their counsel. Mr. Bollan was not allowed to speak, because he was not the agent of the House of Representatives; and Dr. Franklin, finding the other party provided with counsel, embraced the same privilege, and the hearing was adjourned three weeks to enable him to make preparations.

On Saturday, the 29th of January, 1773, the hearing took place. Thirty-five lords of the council were present, and many other persons, a larger number than had ever attended on any previous occasion. It was well understood what would be the course pursued. After the previous meeting, which was held only to adjourn, rumors were circulated about

the city that Dr. Franklin had been soundly castigated by Wedderbern, removed from his office, &c. These rumors only indicated a foregone conclusion; for such was precisely the course which matters took on the examination. Mr. Danning and Mr. John Lee, two eminent barristers, engaged by Dr. Franklin, appeared as counsel for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, producing and reading copies of the famous letters in support of the petition. Mr. Wedderbern followed in an eloquent, artful, and sarcastic speech, bitterly abusing Dr. Franklin, who stood consciously erect and bore it all, apparently unmoved. On this occasion he was dressed in a full suit of Manchester spotted velvet—a circumstance which, of no consequence in itself, has been noted, because he preserved the same suit, and wore it when he signed the treaties of commerce and alliance with France, thus indicating that he felt more than he permitted himself to betray, and that he saw more events in the future than he allowed himself to predict. As Wedderbern proceeded, the members of the council frequently laughed outright, and so far forgot decorum as to cry “Hear! hear!” At no time in his life was he more bitterly and cruelly insulted. He remarked to a friend the next day that “he had never before been so sensible of the power of a good conscience; for that if he had not considered the thing for which he had been so much insulted as one of the best actions of his life, and what he should certainly do again in the like circumstances, he could not have supported it.” The petition of the Assem



bly of Massachusetts for the dismissal of the governor and lieutenant-governor was dismissed as "groundless, vexatious, and scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamor and discontent in the said province." On the Monday morning following, Dr. Franklin received his notice of removal from the office of post-master in the provinces. This he had looked for; but not for the artful mode in which it was made to appear a personal disgrace, and an endorsement of the malice of his enemies. He had been injured, also, in his resources by an order from the ministry to the governor of Massachusetts, to sign no warrant on the colonial treasury for his expenses as agent. How Dr. Franklin viewed the course of the ministry toward him is shown in the following squib, published by him anonymously in the *Public Advertiser*:

"SIR: Your correspondent Britannicus inveighs violently against Dr. Franklin for his ingratitude to the ministry of this nation, who have conferred upon him so many favors. They gave him the post-office of America; they made his son a governor; and they offered him a post of five hundred a year in the Salt-office, if he would relinquish the interests of his country; but he had the wickedness to continue true to it, and is as much an American as ever. As it is a settled point in government here that every man has his price, it is plain that they are bunglers in their business, and have not offered him enough

Their master has as much reason to be angry with them as Rodrigue in the play with his apothecary, for not effectually poisoning Pandolpho, and they must probably make use of the apothecary's justification, viz.:

“*Rodrigue.* You promised to have this Pandolpho upon his bier in less than a week; 'tis now more than a month since, and he still walks and stares me in the face.

“*Fell.* True; and yet I have done my best endeavors. In various ways I have given the miscreant as much poison as would have killed an elephant. He has swallowed dose after dose; far from hurting him, he seems the better for it. He hath a wonderful strong constitution. I find I can not kill him but by cutting his throat, and that, I take it, is not my business.

“*Rodrigue.* Then it must be mine.’”

There is a singular aptness in the above, when Dr. Franklin is known as the author. It lets us into the light in which he regarded ministerial overtures and favors. What he did accept would have been poison indeed, and effectual poison, to almost any man else; and that his influence and character were not effectually destroyed with his countrymen by his relations to the British government was not through any forbearance of his enemies. But he survived it all; and what was designed to be the final blow, his removal from the post-office, with its intended ignominy, only produced the effect already described at

the opening of this chapter. His situation now had become more critical in another light. He kept away from the ministerial levees, and virtually resigned his post as agent of Massachusetts, putting his papers into the hands of Mr. Arthur Lee, who was designated as his successor; but he resumed the business of the agency during Mr. Lee's absence on the Continent.

The famous "tea party" occurred in Boston Harbor while the ministry in England were busy with Dr. Franklin. An act had been passed allowing a drawback on teas sent from England to America, of which the effect was to make the article, even with the imposition of the colonial duty, actually cheaper in America than in England. But the colonists, far from swallowing this gilded pill, were exasperated at the attempt to bribe them into a surrender of principle. The views of the proceedings in America, the return of the tea from some ports, and its destruction in Boston, familiarized the public mind to the expectation that blows might result between the mother country and the colonies. The Hutchinson Letters, and the proceedings thereupon, had brought him into a more prominent position than ever, and caused him to be fully identified with the proceedings in America. The ministerial party particularly charged this upon him; and his friends, who saw in the accusation only a triumphant refutation of the want of patriotism with which his American enemies had charged him, were far from endeavoring to disprove the ministerial allegations. He



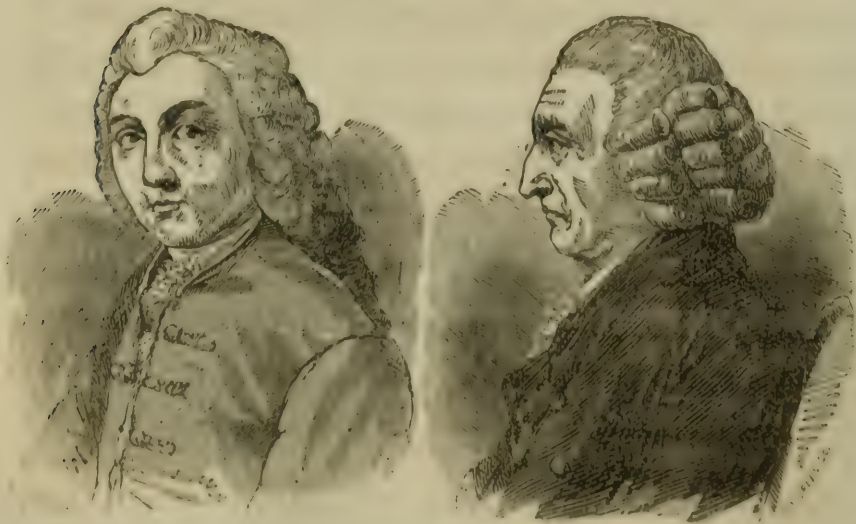
had now become anxious to return home, having been absent ten years. But a Continental Congress was called to meet in September, 1774, and Dr. Franklin decided to wait until the spring of 1775 before his return home.

Before the arrival of that time, his desire to revisit America was abated by the afflicting intelligence of the death of his wife. They had been married forty-four years. Much of that time he had been separated from her by his public duties; but in his absence he might almost be said to be present in his household, by the minute, familiar, and affectionate correspondence, specimens of which we have given. In his autobiography he bears testimony to her worth and good qualities, and in his letters before her death and after he makes frequent and affectionate mention of her. While in the society of the great and wise in Europe, his wife and family were frequent subjects of conversation with him; and he seemed to strive always while she lived to make her, in some sense, the sharer of the social pleasures which he found in the families of his European friends. Those friends bear accidental but honorable testimony to his affection as a husband and a father, in the tokens of their remembrance which they commissioned him to send his family from persons who loved those connected with their honored guest. While the husband was absent, the wife was his competent and judicious agent. She died December 19th, 1774, and was buried in the cemetery of Christ Church, in the corner bounded by Arch and Fifth streets.

In December Franklin received the first petition of the Continental Congress, which, accompanied by Messrs. Bollan and Lee, he carried to Lord Dartmouth. It was presented to the king, and by him laid before Parliament, but without any allusion being made to it in the royal speech. After a heated debate, it was rejected in the House of Commons by a majority which indicated that all hope for a peaceful termination of the difficulties between the two countries was at an end. The rejection of the petition might have been inferred from the refusal of the House to permit the agents of the colonies to appear at the bar of the House in support of it; but the violent language in which certain members spoke of reducing the colonists to obedience at all events, and by force, should force prove necessary, argued a spirit of contemptuous prejudice which prevented a just view of the character of the colonists, or their capacity for resistance. There were gentlemen, however, high in standing, who feared the results of the policy of the administration. Among these was Lord Chatham. He sought the counsel of Franklin upon American affairs, having, as it subsequently appeared, a scheme in view for the reconciliation of the difficulties between Great Britain and the colonies. In his conversation with Franklin, Lord Chatham condemned the late laws against Massachusetts, closing the port of Boston, and other oppressive measures, and expressed the hope that the Americans would continue firm, and defend, by all practicable and legal means, their constitutional rights

He alluded to an opinion prevalent in England that the Americans were aiming to set up an independent state. Dr. Franklin assured him that he had traveled from one end of the Continent to the other, and had never heard such an intention expressed. But it was well understood, and probably Lord Chatham knew, that Franklin, and others best conversant with the character of America, believed and said that pursuance of the ministerial policy would inevitably bring about a rupture. Up to this date, and beyond it, the colonists had only aimed at a redress of grievances.

On the 20th of January, 1775, Franklin was present, by Lord Chatham's desire, in the House of Lords, when that nobleman made his motion for the withdrawal of the troops from Boston. The motion was ably sustained by speeches from Lords Chatham and Camden, but was lost by a large majority.





Lord Chatham stated that this motion was preparatory to a general plan of reconciliation which he proposed to lay before Parliament. And, notwithstanding the defeat of the preparatory motion, Lord Chatham brought forward his plan, in the form of a bill, on the 1st of February. In the mean time, Lord Chatham and Franklin had several conferences upon the plan, which Chatham drew up and submitted to the doctor. A great deal of interest was felt in the subject, and the friends of peace hoped every thing from the talents of Lord Chatham. But the ministerial party bent all their strength against it. It was not even permitted to remain as the basis of any proceedings, or suffered to lie upon the table, but was rejected by a majority of two to one. Lord Sandwich, in his speech in opposition, said that this bill could not be the work of a British peer, but would seem to be the work of some American. "He fancied that he had in his eye the person who drew it up, one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies the country had ever known."

As Lord Sandwich uttered this, he turned toward Franklin. Lord Chatham, in reply, declared that the bill was entirely his own—a declaration he felt the more constrained to make, since many of their lordships had so mean an opinion of it. "But," he added, "he made no scruple to declare that, if he were the first minister of this country, and had the charge of this momentous business, he should not be ashamed of publicly calling to his assistance a person so perfectly acquainted with the whole of Amer-

ican affairs as the gentleman alluded to, and so injuriously reflected on; one, he was pleased to say, whom all Europe held in high estimation for his knowledge and wisdom, and ranked with our Boyles and Newtons; who was an honor, not to the English nation only, but to human nature!"

Such eulogy from Lord Chatham was more than an answer to the abuse of Mr. Wedderbern; and this public praise in the House of Lords was a triumphant vindication from the abuse which Franklin received for doing what he considered his duty before the privy council.

## CHAPTER XXV.

DR. FRANKLIN was a great admirer of chess. He has left among his writings a paper called "The Morals of Chess," in which, with his usual cheerful shrewdness, he lays down rules which will answer for the game of life as well as for the game of chess; and the directions which he prescribes for the conduct of the players might well be carried into all intercourse. The character of his calm and philosophical mind is stamped upon this production; and in it we see the maxim by which the sagacious diplomatist guided his conduct through duties as arduous as those which fell to the share of any patriot of the Revolution. Against all unfairness and lack of courtesy, all unreasonable and insulting triumph, the philosophical chess-player is rationally earnest. An interesting parallel might be drawn between his chess-maxims and his political advice to his countrymen; and it is hardly exaggeration to say that a complete code of the minor morals, and an instructive homily on that true politeness whose foundation is kindness, are contained in the doctor's discourse on this fascinating amusement. "Moderate," says Franklin, in conclusion, "your desire of victory over your adversary, and be pleased with one over yourself. Snatch not eagerly at every advantage offered



by his unskillfulness or inattention, but point out to him kindly that, by such a move, he places or leaves a piece in danger and unsupported; that by another he will put his king in a perilous situation, &c. By this generous civility, you may, indeed, happen to lose the game to your opponent, but you will win what is better, his esteem, his respect, and his affection, together with the silent approbation and good-will of all impartial spectators."

During the intercourse between Franklin and Lord Chatham, advances were made from another quarter, or quarters, to sound the American relative to the possibility of an adjustment of the difficulties between Great Britain and her colonies. No higher compliment could have been paid him than in these proceedings, which at once recognized his intimate knowledge of the subject, and his influence with his countrymen, and virtually condemned the injustice which had been done him in the insult at the council-board. It may be cited, among the romance of modern history, that an individual was thus tacitly reputed to hold the destinies of the world in his hands; and it is in the highest degree creditable to Franklin's patriotism and good sense that he did not make shipwreck of his character for prudence and patriotism in a position which would have overthrown a common man.

The first move in these negotiations was on the chess-board. The well-known skill of the doctor in the game was made the pretext for introducing him to "a certain lady who had a desire of playing with

him at chess, fancying she could beat him." The lady proved to be a sister of Lord Howe, and Dr. Franklin, finding her of "very sensible conversation and pleasing behavior," agreed readily to renewed appointments to try her skill at chess, though at this



time, he says, he "had not the least apprehension that any political business could have any connection with this new acquaintance." At the second meeting with the lady, which occurred in December, 1774, she found a new avenue to the philosopher's good opinion by conversing with him on a mathematical problem. Then the conversation turned from Mathematics to the Parliament just assembled. "What," said Mrs. Howe, "is to be done with this dispute between Great Britain and the colonies? I hope we are not to have civil war." "They ought to kiss and be friends," said the doctor; "what can

they do better? Quarreling can be of service to neither, but is ruin to both." "I have said," replied she, "that I wished government would employ you to settle the dispute for them; I am sure nobody could do it so well. Do not you think the thing is practicable?" "Undoubtedly, madam, if the parties are disposed to reconciliation; for the two countries have really no clashing interests to differ about. It is rather a matter of punctilio, which two or three reasonable people might settle in half an hour. I thank you for the good opinion you are pleased to express of me, but the ministry will never think of employing me in that good work; they rather choose to abuse me." "Ay," said she, "they have behaved shamefully to you. And, indeed, some of them are now ashamed of it themselves." Still, so much was Dr. Franklin in the habit of conversing with different persons about America and its affairs, he thought this but an incidental conversation. At the next interview, which was on Christmas evening, Mrs. Howe desired permission of him to send for her brother, Lord Howe, who, she stated, desired his acquaintance, adding that "he was just by." The doctor's eyes must, by this time, have been opened to these designed accidents, particularly when, after a long conversation on American affairs, Lord Howe desired him to draw up some propositions, embodying the terms on which he conceived a good understanding between the countries might be obtained and established. These propositions, Lord Howe said, they might meet to consider either at his



house, or at Franklin's, or at where the doctor pleased. But as Franklin's visiting Lord Howe, or Lord Howe's visiting Franklin might, Lord Howe thought, occasion some speculation, it was concluded to be best to meet at his sister's, where there was a good pretense with her family and friends for his being often seen, as it was known they played together at chess. She "readily offered her house for that purpose." It is evident, from the circumstances, that such was the intention from the beginning. Ladies have often lent their houses for political purposes—none appear to have done it with better motives than the Hon. Mrs. Howe. Franklin has left this record of her, that he would have no secrets in a business of the nature of that in which he was engaged, which he would not confide to her prudence; for he "had never conceived a higher opinion of the discretion and excellent understanding of any woman on so short an acquaintance." And her residence was accordingly used as the place of conference while the consultations with Lord Howe continued. The messages of Franklin and of Lord Howe, when written, passed through her hands, and, when verbal, were communicated by her.

Dr. Franklin was, at this period, the negotiator with several different parties, nor did he, until some time after, discover that there was any concert among them. All consulted him separately. Lord Chatham, as related in the previous chapter, was seeking his advice; Lord Howe was conferring with him; and two of his friends, Mr. David Barclay and Dr

Fothergill, were consulting him also, in the hope of concocting a plan which might be the basis of a reconciliation between the countries. These gentlemen possessed the means of reaching the ear of a portion of the ministry. Ex-governor Pownall also dined and sounded him, wishing to be dispatched as an envoy to America, with Dr. Franklin as his colleague or secretary. Such was his consequence with politicians; and with the public his movements were deemed of so much moment, that merchants of standing applied to him to verify or disprove the rumors by which stocks rose, as he was said to have procured the amicable settlement of "all the disputes between Great Britain and the American colonies, through his application and influence with Lord North."

The general tenor of the propositions which Franklin submitted in these various conversations required that the colonies should be placed on the same footing which they stood before the difficulties; their officers to be paid from the colonial treasuries instead of by the crown; duties arising under the acts of Parliament to be paid into the colonial treasuries, and thence disbursed; and the claim to the right of taxation by Parliament, or of legislation in the colonies, to be relinquished. The several obnoxious acts restraining manufactures, closing the port of Boston, forbidding the prosecution of the fisheries by the colonists, imposing a duty on tea, &c., he insisted should be repealed, and that the appointment of officers in the customs should be vested in the colo

nial governors, and that the customs laws should be enacted or revised by the colonial Legislatures. He required that no troops should enter the provinces without the consent of the Legislatures, and no requisition be made upon the provinces in time of peace. On the part of the provinces, he engaged that the tea destroyed in Boston Harbor should be paid for, and that the colonies, left to their own loyalty, would do their full share in the support of government. He stipulated, however, that the duties already paid under the Tea Act should be refunded to the colonies in which it had been collected.

While Franklin was conversing with Dr. Fothergill and Mr. Barclay, from time to time, upon these propositions, they conferring with the ministry, and while he was consulting with Lord Howe also, it at length appeared, by his lordship's producing a copy of the memorandum of "Hints" with which Franklin had furnished Mr. Barclay, that there was an understanding between them. Hitherto Franklin had supposed that his share in the negotiation was to be kept secret; but he now proceeded with more openness, directly addressing the ministry. Lord Howe admitted that he had moved with their privity in the matter, and semi-officially proposed to Dr. Franklin the plan of sending a commissioner to America. Franklin replied that a person of rank and dignity, who had a character of candor, integrity, and wisdom, might possibly be of great use. And after this conversation, in which Mrs. Howe participated, it was no secret to Franklin that Lord Howe desired



to be named this commissioner, and to have his assistance as secretary or colleague. It would occupy too much space to detail all the conversations with these various parties, the exceptions and concessions on both sides, the debates, difficulties, and discussions. Meanwhile, the petition from the Congress was received, and its tone and character produced a very favorable effect in England. Although it had been given out, beforehand, that the government would not recognize the existence of an "illegal assembly" by receiving its petition, yet Lord Dartmouth, after perusing it, pronounced it "a decent and proper petition," and cheerfully undertook to present it to the king. It was hoped that it would form the basis of some measures of conciliation. Lord Chatham declared that Congress had acted with "so much temper, moderation, and wisdom, that he thought it the most honorable assembly of statesmen since those of the ancient Greeks and Romans in the most virtuous times." Under all these flattering indications from the ministry, from the opposition, and from the people, Franklin was encouraged to persevere in his efforts for the production of a plan which should be acceptable in both countries. But the first opportunity which was afforded for the expression of the Parliamentary mind, as recorded in our last chapter, dashed his hopes, and induced him to express that opinion of the Houses of Lords and Commons, which is amusingly remarkable as an antithesis to what Chatham said of the American Congress: "*Hereditary legislators!*" thought I. There

would be more propriety, because less hazard of mischief, in having, as in some university in Germany, *hereditary professors of Mathematics!* But this was a hasty reflection; for the elected House of Commons is no better, nor ever will be while the electors receive money for their votes, and pay money wherewith ministers may bribe their representatives when chosen."

As the conversations proceeded, it appeared that Lord Hyde, of the ministry, was one of the parties to whom Messrs. Fothergill and Barclay had access, and that his lordship was also in conference with Lord Howe. Lord Howe told Franklin that he should not expect assistance without rendering a *proper consideration*: that he (Lord Howe), if he undertook the business, should insist on being enabled to make *generous* and *ample* appointments for those he took with him, particularly for Franklin, as well as a firm promise of *subsequent rewards*. "And," said he, "that the ministry may have an opportunity of showing their good disposition toward yourself, will you give me leave, Mr. Franklin, to procure for you, previously, some mark of it—suppose the payment here of the arrears of your salary as agent for New England, which I understand they have stopped for some time past?" Franklin replied, that if the propositions of the ministry were reasonable ones in themselves, possibly he might be able to make them appear so to his countrymen, and he should deem it a great honor to be joined with his lordship in so good a work. If they were otherwise than

reasonable, he doubted whether any man could make them acceptable ; certainly he should not undertake it. But," he added, "if you hope service from any influence I may be supposed to have, drop any purpose of procuring me any previous favors from ministers ; my accepting them would destroy the very influence you propose to make use of ; they would be considered so many bribes to betray the interest of my country ; but only let me see the *propositions*, and, if I approve of them, I shall not hesitate a moment, but will hold myself ready to accompany your lordship at a moment's warning."

Lord Hyde, with whom, at Lord Howe's repeated suggestions, Franklin had at length a personal interview, said to him, " That the administration had a sincere desire of restoring harmony with America, and that it was thought if he (Franklin) would co-operate with them, the business would be easy ; that he hoped he was above retaining resentment against them for what *nobody now approved*, and for which satisfaction might be made him ; that he was, as he (Lord Hyde) understood, in high esteem with the Americans ; that if he would bring about a reconciliation on terms suitable to the dignity of government, he might be as highly esteemed in Britain, and be honored and *rewarded*, perhaps, *beyond his expectation*." What "nobody now approved," referred, as the reader will readily understand, to the proceedings at the council-board, and the removal of Franklin from the post-office. On the same subject, it will be recollected, Mrs. Howe had said to



nim that he “had been treated shamefully!” Lord Howe, in his first interview, remarked, that he was sensible that Franklin had been very ill treated by the ministry; that some of them, he was sure, were ashamed of it, and sorry it had happened; and that he was sure ample satisfaction would one day or other be made him. To both Lord Howe and Lord Hyde, Franklin said that it was his fixed rule not to mix his private affairs with those of the public. He declared that the injuries done to his country were so much the greater, that he did not think his own worth mentioning. He said, on another occasion, when conversing with Messrs. Barclay and Fothergill, and with a full understanding that what he said would be reported to the ministry, that while Parliament claimed and exercised a power of altering our Constitutions at pleasure, there could be no agreement; for we were rendered insecure in every privilege we had a right to, and were secure in nothing. And it being hinted how necessary an agreement was for America, since it was so easy for Britain to burn all our seaport towns, he grew warm, and said, as he informs us, “The chief part of my little property consists of houses in those towns. They might make bonfires of them whenever they pleased: the fear of losing them would never alter my resolution to resist to the last that claim of Parliament; and that it behooved Britain to take care what mischief it did us, for that, sooner or later, it would certainly be obliged to make good all damages, with interest.” Through the whole of these interviews, which

were continued from the 1st of September, 1774, to the middle of March, 1775, Dr. Franklin exhibited a steady regard for the interest and honor of his country, which no personal considerations could shake. His quick perceptions of consequences and results put him on his guard against any admissions which would either in themselves infringe upon the principles which he laid down, or leave the door open for future interference. He desired, if any thing were done, to make it permanent, thorough, and satisfactory. He was placed, in the business, in a position of singular responsibility. It is evident, that if he would have accepted a connection with an embassy or commission such as Lord Howe desired, the measure would have been attempted; but he would not undertake to procure from his countrymen concessions which he thought they would not, or they should not make. A mere politician, seeking personal aggrandizement or profit, would rather have labored to procure the appointment than to convince ministers that, without compliance with the terms which he designated, it would be useless. Lord Hyde asked him, in direct terms, his opinion of the proposed commission, and his answer, given in terms similar to those in which he had expressed himself to Lord Howe, caused the plan to be abandoned. Thus did he sacrifice his personal ambition to the public good, and show himself, as he was truly styled, "at heart an American." And yet, that he was not indifferent to personal considerations, where honor to himself could be received without

prejudice to the public, is evident from the notice he has left of the visit of Lord Chatham to his lodgings. "He stayed with me near two hours, his equipage waiting at the door; and being there while people were coming from church, it was much taken notice of and talked of, as, at that time, was every little circumstance that men thought might possibly any way affect American affairs. Such a visit, from so great a man, on so important a business, flattered not a little my vanity; and the honor of it gave me the more pleasure, as it happened on the very day twelve months that the ministry had taken so much pains to disgrace me before the privy council." It is creditable to Dr. Franklin's estimate of the value of opinion, that he was more gratified with the attentions of Lord Chatham, in the opposition, than with all the studied compliments of the party in power.

The account which we have given of the negotiations of Franklin in London, is compiled from a narrative written on his passage to America, for his son, and first published in W. T. Franklin's edition of his works. The account has all the colloquia ease of his autobiography. We learn, furthermore, from it, that these long-continued evasions and delays wearied out even Franklin's patience, which was at last thoroughly spent by listening to a debate in the House of Lords, in which the Americans were stigmatized as knaves, who sought a dispute only to avoid payment of their debts. Under the irritation which he felt, he drew up the following petition, to present to Lord Dartmouth before his departure:



*“A Memorial of Benjamin Franklin, Agent of the  
Province of Massachusetts Bay.*

“Whereas an injury done can only give the party injured a right to full reparation, or, in case that be refused, a right to return an equal injury ; and whereas the blockade of Boston, now continued nine months, hath, every week of its continuance, done damage to that town equal to what was suffered there by the India Company, it follows that such *exceeding* damage is an *injury* done by this government for which reparation ought to be made ; and whereas reparation of injuries ought always (agreeably to the custom of all nations, savage as well as civilized) to be first required before satisfaction is taken by a return of damage to the aggressors, which was not done by Great Britain in the instance above mentioned, I, the underwritten, do therefore, as their agent, in the behalf of my country, and the said town of Boston, protest against the continuance of the said blockade ; and I do hereby solemnly demand satisfaction for the accumulated injury done them beyond the value of the India Company’s tea destroyed.

“And whereas the conquest of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the coasts of Labrador and Nova Scotia, and the fisheries possessed by the French there, and on the Banks of Newfoundland, as far as they were more extended than at present, was made by the *joint forces* of Great Britain and the colonies, the latter having nearly an equal number of men in that

service with the former, it follows that the colonies have an equitable and just right to participate in the advantages of those fisheries; I do therefore, in the behalf of the colony of the Massachusetts Bay, protest against the act now under consideration in Parliament for depriving that province, with others, of that fishery (on the pretense of their refusing to purchase British commodities), as an act highly unjust and injurious; and I give notice that satisfaction will probably one day be demanded for all the injury that may be done and suffered in the execution of such act; and that the injustice of the proceeding is likely to give such umbrage to *all the colonies*, that in no future war, wherein other conquests may be meditated, either a man or a shilling will be obtained from any of them to aid such conquests till full satisfaction be made as aforesaid."

This document he signed as Agent of the Province. Before presenting it, however, he handed it for perusal to his friend, Mr. Thomas Walpole, and asked his advice upon it. Franklin's description of this interview is quite amusing. The philosopher, on the point of departure for America, was bustling about in his room, packing up. The banker, to whom he had submitted this bellicose manifesto, stood in dumb amazement, looking alternately at the paper and at the writer, as if he doubted whether Franklin was quite in his senses. Franklin, who perhaps began now to have his own doubts about the wisdom of such a measure, desired his friend to

put it in his pocket, and consult another friend upon it. On the next day Walpole returned him the memorial, with a note, objecting to it as likely to be attended with dangerous consequences to himself, and to contribute to exasperate the nation. He afterward called upon him and more fully stated his objections. "I had no desire," says Franklin, "to make matters worse, and, being grown cooler, took the advice so kindly given me."

Lord Howe had told Franklin that his views of a mission were at present at an end, and that he hoped, if all things should still take a more favorable turn, he might hope for the doctor's co-operation. Thus ended that matter. And the result of the efforts of Dr. Fothergill and David Barclay is thus summed in a note which Franklin received from Dr. Fothergill on the evening before he left England. In that note Dr. Fothergill desired Franklin to assemble certain friends whom he designated, and others, "and inform them, that whatever specious pretenses are offered, they are all hollow, and that to get a larger field on which to fatten a herd of worthless parasites is all that is regarded. Perhaps," continues the note, "it may be proper to acquaint them with David Barclay's and our united endeavors, and the effects. They will stun, at least, if not convince the most worthy, that nothing favorable is intended, if more unfavorable articles can not be obtained." Something is to be allowed for the mortification of defeat in the language of this note; but it is evident from it that the writer felt that he and his friends had



been employed and amused with no higher aims, on the part of the ministry, than to provide employment for some of their political friends. If so, Franklin had proved an impracticable man for the purposes of truckling politicians. The promise of office, the tender even of justice in the payment of moneys properly his due, the eclat of an important mission, the apologies, almost direct, of the ministry which had injured and insulted him, all proved unavailing. His course, in those transactions, places him in proud contrast with such men as Pownall, for instance, who was eagerly striving to buy into the favor of the ministry, and laboring with might and main to procure such an appointment as Franklin was in vain solicited to accept.

Franklin had watched with observant eyes the condition of the dispute, and the character of the parties on both sides of the Atlantic. He knew in what ideas of government and of right his countrymen had been educated, and he was a full sharer, not from enthusiasm, but from conviction, in the political views of his countrymen. In the early stages of the controversy, while there was yet hope that expostulation and remonstrance would avail, and that the administration of the mother country might be induced to respect the rights which the British Constitution guaranteed to the subjects of the crown in America, his moderation seemed, perhaps, too great to the more ardent of his countrymen. But as he discovered the inveteracy with which Parliament clung to opinions and political axioms at war with

justice and opposed to right, and as he became convinced of the impossibility of removing the prejudices and misconceptions which, while they existed, effectually barred out the hope of accommodation without the sacrifice of principles dear to the Americans as their lives, he came out of the cloud which a misunderstanding of his character and motives on the part of those more zealous than he had raised around him. Calm in the sense of his own integrity, he had labored for the best good of his countrymen, till circumstances had, at last, fully vindicated him from all accusations except that of being "too much an American." No private individual could have commanded a "higher price" than he, if he would but have consented to allow himself to be regarded "as in the market;" no prince, with nothing to desire, could have more firmly rejected every thing which looked like compromise of principle or betrayal of trust.

The ten years which he spent at this time in England were, in effect, ten years of negotiation. His business was not restricted to the levees of ministers, to audiences of the great, or to the common though less public avenues of diplomacy. While in all these he was assiduous and laborious, he made a party to himself among the learned and ingenious. His scientific attainments were a password—and not merely a password, but a warrant—to the society of the most enlightened men of Europe, and his writings were his *avants couriers* to the new scenes which he was soon to visit. In addition to all these

means of influence, the people were appealed to through the press, in the political and common-sense productions with which, anonymously, confessedly, or under allowable disguises, he was constantly arresting the public eye and agitating the public mind. From a portion of these we have made extracts, since to pass them over would be to do injustice to his character, and would leave the reader without an adequate conception of the arduous labors of his residence in England. The value of his influence on the public mind is attested by the efforts made by ministers to purchase him; and while the popular ear of his countrymen is more frequently appealed to by the tale of the deeds in arms of his compatriots of the Revolution, the no less efficient, though less public and striking service of Benjamin Franklin is held in grateful remembrance by the calm and reflecting.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

FRANKLIN arrived at Philadelphia on the 5th of May, 1775; but it was not to attend to the private business from which he had been so long absent, or to cherish that attention to his personal ease and comfort which a man might be supposed to desire whose years had run to the allotted amount of three-score and ten. On the next day after his arrival the Assembly of Pennsylvania elected him to the Continental Congress, which was summoned to meet on the 10th of the month. He was also appointed by the Assembly a member of the "Committee of Safety," and in the arduous duties of both these public bodies his time was incessantly employed. The high reputation which a long life of service had obtained for him, and the singular discretion and ability which he had exhibited under most trying circumstances, made men turn to him in these times of danger and excitement as to one whose counsel and advice could not be dispensed with. Other patriots went into the work of the Revolution young, or at middle age; Franklin, the septuagenarian, united to the experience of years the sanguine hope and the activity of youth. He had been, by the peculiarity of his position, a "spy in the enemy's camp;" for an enemy Britain, by the blood shed at Lexington

and Concord, had now become. He knew the disposition of the British ministry and nation, and his countrymen rightly judged that such knowledge and experience as his were at this crisis invaluable. And he applied his powers with no stint or hesitation. He spared himself no labor; and when we read, in the Congressional records, in the local history of Philadelphia, and in the annals of the Revolutionary army, now just organizing, the evidences of his industry, we are fain to forget, or to deem it impossible, that this was the man who, ten years before, professed himself to have arrived at the time of life when he should retire from active life. The post-office was reorganized, and Franklin was placed at its head by Congress; he was at the head of the Indian bureau; he was placed upon the secret committees for correspondence abroad, and for procuring munitions of war; and of almost every committee of importance he was a member. Indeed, as if with one consent, in all the various duties and details which demanded the attention of Congress, it was deemed necessary to have the advantage of his sagacity and experience. The army in Massachusetts was to be organized—Benjamin Franklin was deputed a member to confer with the commander-in-chief. On his return from this duty, he learned that he had been elected to the Assembly of Pennsylvania. While at Cambridge he had the pleasure of putting in the hands of a committee of the Massachusetts Assembly one hundred pounds, remitted to him from friends in England for the sufferers at Con-

cord and Lexington, and their connections. Ways and means were to be provided—Franklin was consulted. The marine service was to be regulated—Franklin again was in request. Even upon the device of a national seal he was engaged. While thus employed, how must the old patriot's thoughts have carried him back to the time when, fifty years before, he was contriving ornaments for the New Jersey paper money, and to the devices and mottoes which he furnished for the Philadelphia Volunteers thirty years before this period! His early publications on paper money must also have recurred to him while he was engaged in the details of the Continental paper money issue. It is to be noted that, in the emission of the money, which afterward so sadly depreciated, the advice of Franklin was not followed. He proposed that the bills should bear interest; but other counsel ruled, and this proposal was not adopted. He also recommended, after the first emission, the borrowing of the bills already issued, instead of the emission of a further sum. He advised, further, the payment of the interest in silver. Neither of these suggestions were adopted until too late to check the evil which they were intended to obviate.

Among the results of his labors in committees which have been preserved, is a "Vindication and Offer from Congress to Parliament." In this report all the charges which the Parliamentary enemies of the colonies had brought against them are refuted, and the offer of one hundred thousand pounds per



annum is made to Great Britain, over and above the usual aids in time of war, conditioned on certain privileges of trade to be accorded to the colonies, and supposing, of course, the removal of the grievances under which they labored. This proposition was never acted upon, and does not appear on the public records; for the course of Parliament at this time demonstrated how futile were such efforts at reconciliation. How much Franklin had caught of the fire of Lexington and Concord may be gathered from a preamble to a resolution which the doctor drew up about this time. In this preamble he declares that "the British nation, through great corruption of manners, and extreme dissipation and profusion, both public and private, have found all honest resources insufficient to supply their excessive luxury and prodigality, and thereby have been driven to the practice of every injustice which avarice could dictate or rapacity execute; that, not satisfied with the immense plunder of the East, obtained by sacrificing millions of the human species, they have lately turned their eyes to the West, and, grudging us the peaceable enjoyment of the fruits of our hard labor and virtuous industry, have for years past been endeavoring to extort the same from us, under color of laws regulating trade, and have actually succeeded in draining us of large sums, to our great loss and detriment; and, impatient to seize the whole, they have at length proceeded to open robbery, declaring by a solemn act of Parliament that all our estates are theirs, and all our property found upon the seas

divisible among such of their armed plunderers as shall take the same; and have even dared, in the same act, to declare, that all the spoilings, thefts, burnings of houses and towns, and murders of innocent people, perpetrated by their wicked and inhuman corsairs upon our coasts, previous to any war declared against us, were just actions, and shall be so deemed, contrary to several of the commandments of God (which by this act they presume to repeal), and to all the principles of right, and all the ideas of justice, entertained heretofore by every other nation, savage as well as civilized, thereby manifesting themselves to be *hostes humani generis*." No document, and no speech of the period, breathes more earnest and determined opposition than this, or places the duty of resistance on broader grounds; for the resolution to which this was a preamble declared it to be the duty of the colonies to make reprisals upon their oppressors. The first act which Congress performed upon its assembling was to declare that hostilities had commenced on the part of Great Britain, and to resolve that the colonies should therefore be immediately put in a state of defense. Even after this, a petition, at the desire of the moderate party, was moved and carried, which Franklin speaks of as "another humble petition to the crown, to give Great Britain one more chance, one opportunity more, of recovering the friendship of the colonies." He had, however, no hope that it would produce any such result, for he was too well aware of the disposition of the British ministry; and he

gave way to the motion from a desire to conciliate and unite the members of Congress.

During all the time that communication between the two countries was open, he kept up his correspondence with his friends in England, and resumed it when he afterward resided in France. In a letter from David Hartley to Dr. Franklin, we find exceptions taken to the charge that the people of England were "dissipated and corrupt," which was brought against them in an address from Congress to the Assembly of Jamaica. Probably the same pen from which came the preamble above quoted, appeared in the address. Franklin, though too ingenuous to condemn a whole nation for the acts of the ministry, could not, at a time like that of '76, preserve all the nice distinctions which friendship for many of the people of England would dictate; nor could he forget that the ministry represented the people. In a letter written in the autumn of 1775 to a friend in England, he says, as if in answer to that friend, and assenting to his opinion, "I am persuaded that the body of the British people are our friends; but they are changeable, and by your lying gazettes may soon be made our enemies. Our respect for them will proportionably diminish, and I see clearly that we are on the high road to mutual family hatred and detestation."

In July, 1775, Dr. Franklin, in his individual capacity, reported in Congress a plan of confederation. It was more perfect than the one that received the sanction of Congress when that body acted upon



the subject, particularly in regard to representation, as it provided for proportioning the representatives to the number of inhabitants, and gave each individual vote its weight. When, in 1776, the plan of confederation was adopted, the same principle upon which the votes of Congress had been counted, namely, one vote for each colony, was preserved. Franklin opposed it earnestly, and even prepared a protest against it, designed to be presented as the voice of the Convention of Pennsylvania, then in session; but he was induced to withdraw his opposition in consideration of the necessity of harmony. In some other respects in which his plan of confederation differed from that which Congress adopted, the wisdom of Franklin was acknowledged by the adoption of the present Constitution, which Franklin's plan resembles in many particulars. The doctor, in one of his articles, provided that Ireland, as well as the provinces on this Continent, and the West India Islands, might join the confederacy: a circumstance which was debated upon with no small artillery of words in Great Britain, where, when published, it was cited as a proof of the design of the Americans to separate finally from Great Britain: a design which, in all their official acts, they denied until the Declaration of Independence; and which, after that solemn act, they neither denied nor permitted to be questioned. Franklin's plan was proposed to be adhered to until a reconciliation took place with Great Britain; and, in event of the failure of a reconciliation, was to be perpetual. As the plan

adopted by Congress was not acted upon until after the formal severance from the mother country, no such contingent clause was necessary.

In March, 1776, a commission, consisting of Dr. Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll, was appointed to go to Canada to regulate the operations of the American army in that province, to assist the Canadians in organizing a government, to invite Canada into the Union, and to pledge the support of the other colonies. Rev. John Carroll, afterward Roman Catholic Bishop of Baltimore, and M. Mesplet, a French printer, also accompanied the mission. From the first gentleman much was hoped, from the circumstances of his religious faith, and his having been educated in France. With the aid of the latter a printing-press was to be established; for the patriots of the Revolution knew the full power of the press, and where Franklin was an adviser, its aid was never left untried. To Charles W. F. Dumas, who was, on Franklin's recommendation, appointed agent of the United States at the Hague, Dr. Franklin wrote in December, 1775: "The short *Exposé* of what has passed between the court of Britain and the colonies, being a very concise and clear statement of facts, will be reprinted here for the use of our new friends in Canada." This "*Exposé*" was one of a number of works, including an edition of Vattel, which Dr. Franklin had received from M. Dumas; and perhaps the receipt of it suggested the idea of a press in the sister province. But press, commissioners, and encouragement came

too late. Canada had a memory of what she had suffered from the colonies, as allies and dependencies of Great Britain, too keen to make her readily coalesce with them in any movement. In the British colonies the press had preceded the taking up of arms, as well as supported it. Canada had not possessed that advantage; nor were the body of the people ripe for any change. The commissioners found the American army in full retreat from Quebec. Dr. Franklin and Mr. Carroll returned from Montreal after a very short stay, and the other commissioners came away with the army at the evacuation of the city.

The commissioners, leaving Philadelphia on the 20th of March, did not arrive in Montreal till near the end of April. It was a most arduous journey to a man of Franklin's age; and, while on his

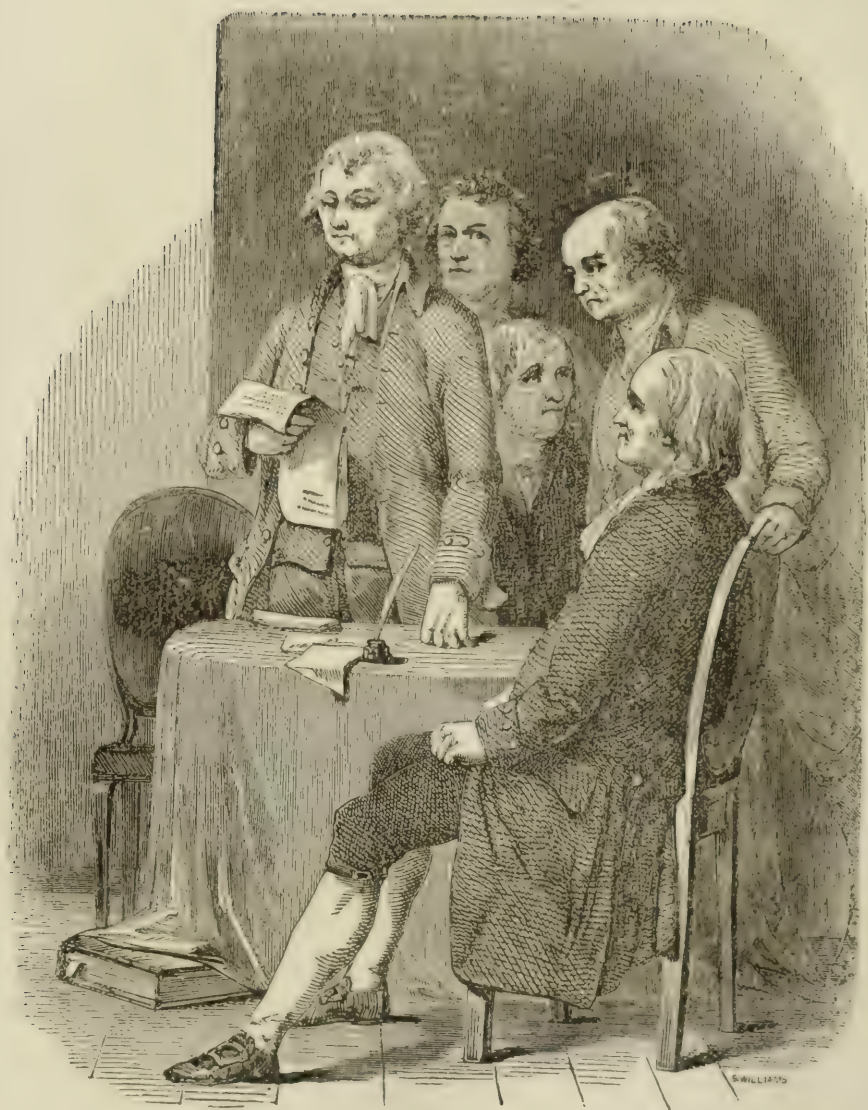




way, he wrote from Saratoga to Josiah Quincy : "I begin to apprehend that I have undertaken a fatigue that, at my time of life, may prove too much for me; so I sit down to write to a few friends by *way of farewell*." And yet, while the infirmities of age thus weighed upon him that he declared himself "at the same time oppressed with years and business," we find in his letters all the stern resolution of a man upon whom age nor difficulty could operate to the defeat of courage, and whom no present cloud could blind to future hope. He arrived in Philadelphia, on his return, in June, grateful to the friends who had made his return passage less irksome by their kindness, and in some degree refreshed in mind by the renewal of intercourse with old companions. But he was admonished now, by increasing infirmity to decline, for the first time in his life, posts to which the confidence of his fellow-citizens had elected him, and begged leave to resign his appointment to the Committee of Safety, and his election to the Assembly of Pennsylvania. He had retired from both these posts previous to his journey to Canada, and had been reappointed in his absence.

On the 7th of June, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, seconded by John Adams, moved the resolution declaring the independence of the colonies. It was referred to a committee, who reported it in the following terms : "Resolved, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and of right ought

to be, totally dissolved." This resolution was debated in committee of the whole on Saturday the 8th, and Monday the 10th of June; but it appearing that the delegates from some of the provinces were not ripe for the measure, the debate was postponed to the 1st of July. In the mean time, a committee, consisting of Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Roger Sherman, and R. R. Livingston, were appointed to draw up a declaration. Richard Henry Lee, whose fervid eloquence had urged the measure, was called from Congress by the illness of one of his family, and for this reason was not appointed on the committee. The Declaration, substantially as Jefferson drafted it, was reported on the 28th of June. On the 1st of July, the original resolution was carried by nine of the thirteen colonies, Pennsylvania and South Carolina voting against it, Delaware being divided, and New York being permitted to withdraw on account of the character of the instructions of the delegates, dated twelve months before, which enjoined them to do nothing to impede reconciliation with the mother country. The votes of the members, it will be recollected, were taken by colonies, each colony having one vote. All the colonies came into the measure by the adoption of the Declaration, and all the members present on the 4th of July signed the Declaration, except John Dickinson. He retired from public life for two years, when he resumed his place in Congress, and was distinguished for his zeal, as he had ever been respected for his integrity. His was a mind the scruples of which were to be







respected, as his conduct was ever guided by the purest of motives. An amusing instance of Franklin's humor is preserved in connection with the signature. "We must be unanimous," said Hancock; "we must all hang together." "Yes," answered Franklin, "or most assuredly we shall all hang separately." Jefferson's draft, which received in committee only a few verbal alterations, in the course of the debate in Congress was amended in very many, and some essential particulars, as may be perceived by the original draft as preserved in his Correspondence. Franklin, who saw his uneasiness under the criticisms of his colleagues, consoled and amused him with an anecdote of a hatter, whose inscription for a sign, "John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money," was reduced by the criticisms of friends to plain John Thompson, with the figure of a hat subjoined.

Dr. Franklin had a remarkable aptness in the relation of anecdotes, and the application of parallels to carry conviction, or illustrate a point. When the qualifications for suffrage were on one occasion under discussion, he said, "Suppose you place the property qualification at the price of an ass. The voter, while riding to the polls, is disabled by the death of the beast, which happens to be his whole property. The man is disfranchised. Now, in whom was the right to vote—in the citizen, or his donkey?" In the Convention which met to frame a Constitution for Pennsylvania in 1776, of which, of course, Franklin was a member, he brought forward and carried a favorite theory—that there should be but one body

in a Republican Legislature. He compared a Legislature with two branches to a wagon with horses at each end pulling different ways; and to a snake with two heads, the heads choosing opposite sides of a twig, and the body perishing of hunger and thirst while its heads debated the matter. The doctor's plan, one of the few political errors of his life, was adopted, but expunged from the Constitution upon its revision after the close of the Revolutionary War. As an instance of his aptness at parallels, an essay written after the adoption of the Federal Constitution is worthy of remark. A public speaker had said "that the repugnance of a great part of mankind to good government was such, that he believed that if an angel from heaven was to bring down a Constitution formed there for our use, it would, nevertheless, meet with violent opposition." He was reproved for the supposed extravagance, says Franklin, and did not justify it. "Probably it might not have immediately occurred to him that the experiment had been tried, and that the event was recorded in that most faithful of all histories, the Holy Bible; otherwise he might, as it seems to me, have supported his opinion by that unexceptionable authority." The doctor then proceeded to relate the history of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in such a manner as to furnish a simple, but very neat and instructive commentary on the scripture history, while he showed that it furnished precisely such an instance as the orator had supposed.

The contingency to which Lord Howe had referred in his last conversation with Franklin in Lon-



don, that he might be sent to America in order to effect a reconciliation, occurred in 1776, and his lordship lost no time in addressing Franklin, between whom and himself there appears to have existed a sincere friendship. But, unfortunately, the character of Lord Howe's powers only, as Franklin expressed it, made the business "hopeless" on which he was sent so far. "Directing pardons to be offered to the colonies, who are the very parties injured," says Franklin, "expresses, indeed, that opinion of our ignorance, baseness, and insensibility, which your uninformed and proud nation has long been pleased to entertain of us; but it can have no other effect than that of increasing our resentment. It is impossible, we should think, of submission to a government that has, with the most wanton barbarity and cruelty, burned our defenseless towns in the midst of winter, excited the savages to massacre our farmers, and our slaves to murder their masters, and is even now bringing mercenaries to deluge our settlements with blood." Franklin refers with feeling to the efforts which he had made to prevent the "breaking of that pure and noble vase, the British Empire," and to the tears of joy which wet his cheek when Lord Howe gave him hopes in London that "a reconciliation might soon take place." He concludes as follows: "I know your great motive in coming hither was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and I believe, when you find *that* impossible on any terms given you to propose, you will relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honorable private station."

The correspondence, so far as the two friends were concerned, resulted in nothing but the exchange of assurances that the relation in which they were now placed to each other did not abate their personal amity. In a national point of view, nothing was effected. Nor did the interview which afterward took place between Lord Howe on the one part, and Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge, a committee of Congress, on the other, effect any thing, except to convince all Americans but those who were averse to all resistance, that the only hope now left to them was in the maintenance of the position which they had assumed, by force of arms. And now the attention of Congress was turned to the seeking of foreign alliances. While any hope, however dim, remained of obtaining justice from the magnanimity of Great Britain, to seek foreign aid would have been to impede negotiations; but as they had been forced to the last alternative, nothing now remained for the States but to strengthen themselves in their hostile position.

On the 26th of September Franklin was appointed a commissioner, to join Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, already in Europe, and "transact the business of the United States at the court of France." He embarked on the 27th of October, at Chester, with two of his grandsons, on board of the Continental sloop-of-war *Reprisal*, Captain Wickes. Previous to his leaving Philadelphia, he gave a noble instance of his patriotism by placing all the money he could command, nearly four thousand pounds, at the disposal of Congress, as a loan. He gave, also, evidence

of his courage, and fortitude under insult, by proposing to the secret committee that he should be sent to England instead of France. The manner in which he proposed this should be effected was by drawing up the sketch of a proposition for peace. Among the reasons for such a step, he said that "the having such propositions in charge will, by the law of nations, be some protection to the commissioners or ambassadors, if they should be taken." This sentence may have had some reference to the dangers of the sea. In another paragraph he says: "As the having such propositions to make, or any powers to treat of peace, will furnish a pretense for B. F.'s going to England, where he has many friends and acquaintance, particularly among the best writers and the ablest speakers in both houses of Parliament, he thinks he shall be able, when there, if the terms are not accepted, to work up such a division of sentiments in the nation as greatly to weaken its exertions against the United States, and lessen its credit in foreign countries."

These propositions were not acted upon. If Franklin hoped that they would have been during the period which elapsed after his appointment and before his departure, he does not in any of his correspondence betray chagrin or disappointment. He was ever ready to defer in minor matters to the opinions of others, and was too patriotic to sacrifice the advantage of his country to his own private views, as he showed in numerous instances in his public career



## CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANKLIN arrived in Paris on the 21st of December, 1776. The ocean passage occupied thirty days, from the Capes of the Delaware to the mouth of the Loire. Contrary winds preventing the Reprisal from proceeding to Nantes, Franklin disembarked at Auray, whence he traveled to Nantes, and thence to Paris. His appointment had been kept secret; and he even held it unannounced after his arrival, waiting for events to show in what manner it would be most prudent to conduct himself; for as yet it was to be ascertained whether France would receive a credited commissioner from the United States, and thus acknowledge the existence of the new government.

But Benjamin Franklin could no longer travel unheralded or unattended. His name and fame had long been familiar to "all sorts of people," and he had won "golden opinions" from them all. In the cottage—the humble abode of the peasant and the artisan—his lessons of life were oracles; received, not as the condescension of some hereditary millionaire, who could well afford to teach lessons of economy which he had never had occasion to observe, and to talk of self-denial of which he knew nothing in practice, but as the lessons which the teacher had

learned in his own experience. He was one of the people, elevated by the force of his own character to a prouder position than the accident of birth could confer. In the library, the laboratory, and the university, he was known as one who had touched nothing in practical science and philosophy but to elucidate it; whose discoveries had resolved doubts which had perplexed men for ages; and whose practical experiments had exploded the theories which had amused with inconsistencies those who chose rather to imagine than to test—to theorize than to observe. Politicians and diplomatists knew him too, as one whose tongue and pen had sustained the cause of the weak against the strong, and defended the New World against the assumptions of the Old. His personal appearance aided in inspiring the people with enthusiasm, and awing the proud into respect. His capacity for adapting himself to the place and the time made him at home in the *salons* of the gay, and amid the formalities of the court; agreeable in a *tête-à-tête*, and the attraction of the drawing-room. He could receive popular applause without betraying elation or condescension, and observe the nicest points of etiquette without suffering it to be forgotten that he was a Republican and an American.

France—for Paris then was France even more emphatically than it now is—was delighted with Franklin. Pictures, busts, medallions of the illustrious American were met on every hand. His venerable aspect left the admirers of the picturesque—

as all Frenchmen are—nothing to desire. The actual corresponded with the ideal; Franklin looked the sage that the mind had pictured him. He was said to “join to the demeanor of Phocion the spirit of Socrates;” and the imaginative Frenchman saw in the venerable philosopher “a sage of antiquity come back to give austere lessons and generous examples to the moderns.” It was more than a year after the arrival of Franklin in France before the United States were formally recognized by the admission of their commissioners to audience of the king. While prudence rendered this public reserve not only advisable, but imperative, substantial assistance was rendered to the American cause by the advance of two millions of livres as a loan from “generous individuals,” and one million from the farmers-general on account of tobacco to be shipped. The celebrated Beaumarchais had already, with the advice of Mr. Deane, shipped large quantities of munitions of war to the United States, whether upon his own account, or with money advanced by the government, is still a moot point. His heirs have frequently presented claims to Congress for these advances, but the claims have been met by the allegation that he acted only as the disbursing agent of the French government. The money advanced to Franklin proved to have been drawn from the king’s treasury.

The commissioners were authorized to contract with France a treaty of commerce; to procure from the French government eight line of battle ships; to



borrow money and forward military stores and to obtain other alliances, if possible, with the European powers. On the very next day after Franklin's arrival, he held a consultation with his colleagues, and on the 28th of December, the French minister of foreign affairs admitted them to an audience. At his suggestion, they drew up a memoir relating the situation of affairs in the United States, and stating their mission; but no answer was received to it. Meanwhile, the money, as already stated, was advanced, and they were assured of protection while they remained in France, and that all privileges would be accorded to American commerce compatible with treaties with England. In this state of unrecognized friendship or toleration, Dr. Franklin and his colleagues labored for about a year in the prosecution of their delicate and somewhat complicated mission. They purchased and forwarded warlike stores, and built two frigates, one at Amsterdam and another at Nantes; but, notwithstanding that every thing was done with as much caution as possible, they were frequently interrupted. The British ambassador was, of course, aware of the actual state of things, and his vigilance, through the agency of spies, was employed, not so much in ascertaining what was going on, as in detecting facts upon which he could make representations of complaint. In this he was often successful, and the French government was compelled several times to make a formal interference with the doings of the commissioners. This assumed disapproval of their doings, while it

sometimes impeded and delayed the commissioners, did not change their course, since they very well understood what were the real sentiments of the French government. And the peculiar character of Franklin stood him at this time in great stead. He was admitted to circles, and enjoyed intercourse, as the *philosopher*, which gave him most important facilities; but to which, as commissioner of the United States, he could not have obtained admittance. While the duties of the commissioners in reference to supplies was so effectually performed, in the seeking of foreign alliances they were less successful. Indeed, Franklin disapproved of this portion of his instructions from the beginning; and although he early received power to treat with Spain, he declined the performance of that commission, and gave Congress such satisfactory reasons for his conduct that they deferred to his opinion.

But while the commissioners were unrecognized by friendly powers, they did not hesitate to address themselves to the British minister in France as American commissioners. Lord Stormont, in answer to one of their notes, a second time dispatched, made answer, "The king's ambassador receives no applications from rebels, unless they come to implore his majesty's mercy." As the note to which this haughty answer was returned was an application for exchange of prisoners, the commissioners sent back his lordship's paper with the remark, "In answer to a letter which concerns some of the most material interests of humanity, and of the two nations Great

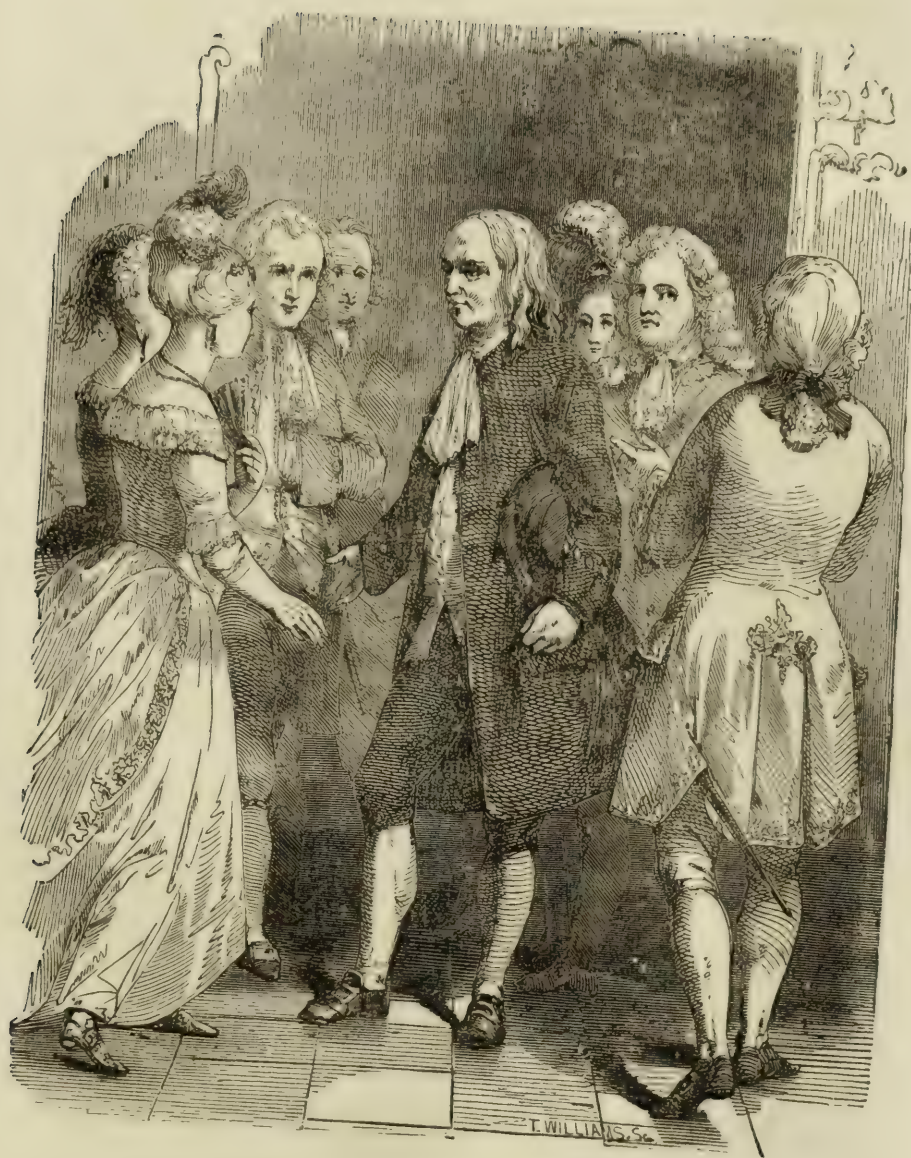
Britain and the United States, we received the following indecent paper, which we return for your lordship's more mature consideration." The time at length arrived when the government which thus repulsed the commissioners as rebels, found it their policy to make friendly, though indirect overtures to the same commissioners; and the recognition of American prisoners as human beings was forced upon Great Britain by the number of British prisoners taken, upon whom retaliation, according to the usages of war, might be practiced.

At length, in February, 1778, a formal treaty of commerce was signed between the American commissioners on the one part, and the Count de Vergennes and M. Gerard on the other. The capture of the army of Burgoyne, and the general good conduct of the American troops; the union and firmness which were manifested in the counsels of the Americans, and the resolution of the people to defend the high and noble ground they had taken, had satisfied the French government that the war in America would prove something more than a mere temporary revolt, to be crushed by the power of Great Britain, or defeated by the defection of the colonies, or any of them. The treaty was based on the most magnanimous principles of reciprocity, no advantages being taken of the weak state of the Americans. Some little delay occurred in the signing, to give time for consultation with the Spanish court, as was required by the relations between the two monarchies; but as Spain declined to be a party



France entered alone into a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. The draft of a treaty of alliance was also produced by the French minister, and agreed to, its ratification being contingent upon the declaration of war against France by Great Britain.

On the 20th of March, 1778, the American commissioners, now the acknowledged agents of an independent power, were formally received by the French monarch. It was an event in the life of Franklin which rewarded him for all past discouragements, inasmuch as, in its consequences, he could not but perceive it involved the almost certain success of his country. A powerful government was now pledged to defend the American claim to existence as a separate nation; for the rupture between Great Britain and France was weighed in the negotiation as a sure event. He had also the gratification to find the act of the government endorsed by the people, for on his way to Versailles, and on his return, he was greeted with the most enthusiastic popular acclamations; and whenever he appeared in Paris, a similar enthusiasm exhibited the popular feeling. This favorable disposition toward his country he knew was in no small degree to be attributed to his own personal efforts and character. Hereditary hatred to Great Britain, and the consciousness that in the last treaty with that power concessions had been made which were humiliating to the pride of France, made both government and people disposed to befriend America; and the hope of disabling by







dismemberment a powerful rival was all the advantage that the government counted upon. But this reason would have sufficed only to make war tolerable to a people already tax-ridden. Franklin made it popular. His pen and his tongue had also made the cause of the United States to appear not only just, but likely to be successful with those to whom the most powerful of tests was to be applied—demands for money and credit.

Testimonies to his personal influence came from every quarter. In a previous part of this work we have detailed the efforts made to negotiate with or through him in London. If the British ministry then esteemed him a man whom it was worth their while to secure, subsequent events had not abated their belief in his importance. He had so accurately informed those who consulted him upon the state of the public mind in America, and so truly represented the claims and opinions of his countrymen, as events had shown, that it is no matter of surprise that continual advances were made to him, informally, during the whole time of his residence in France. The British ambassador had not withdrawn from Paris before a secret agent of the British government called upon Franklin. He was an old English friend of Dr. Franklin, and aimed to obtain from him some hints on which propositions could be based from Great Britain to her revolted colonies. But Franklin had experience enough of the futility of such conversations, and replied that he had authority to listen to terms, but none to sug-

gest them. In answer to a letter written from London, by the same friend, Mr. James Hutton, Franklin wrote that *peace* might be obtained by Great Britain's dropping all pretension to govern America, and *friendship* might be secured by granting such terms in the treaty as would show generosity and good-will; such as indemnification for the American towns burned, and the disgrace, instead of reward, of the abettors of war. He said, however, that he had no idea that his advice would be regarded, "for none but God can give good counsel, and wisdom to follow it." To Mr. William Pulteney, who, under the assumed name of Williams, next appeared in Paris, with the understood sanction of Lord North, Franklin was equally firm. Mr. Pulteney offered the basis of a treaty, to which Franklin replied, that no voluntary return to British allegiance would be thought of by the Americans, and that to acknowledge the independence of the United States was the proper means to open any negotiation.

Next followed Mr. David Hartley, a personal friend of Dr. Franklin's, and a man who sincerely desired peace, and had opposed in his place in Parliament, and in other methods, the measures of the British ministry which had led to the estrangement of the colonies. Mr. Hartley, in his correspondence, strongly appealed to Franklin against the alliance with France, and even begged that he would use his influence to prevent its ratification by Congress. In his personal interview he made nearer approaches to terms than the others had done, by inquiring

whether superior advantages, commercial and otherwise, and an alliance offensive and defensive, could be obtained by a treaty with America. The purport of the message seemed to be to discover whether America could not be brought into neutrality, at least while Great Britain prosecuted the war with France. The answer was, of course, a decided negative. To the other inquiries, in tenor similar to those propounded by former agents, Franklin returned answers similar to what he had expressed to them. Mr. Hartley continued his correspondence, apparently with the sanction of Lord North, until the subject of peace was brought forward in Parliament; and through the whole there was a continued effort to sunder the union between France and the United States. He represented the alliance with France as a stumbling-block and impediment in the way of a treaty; and, in fact, advised what Franklin considered perfidy in the matter. The doctor attributed his advancing such a proposition to a "mist thrown before his eyes" by his love of peace, and fear of the destruction of America. Another circumstance which blinded the worthy philanthropist—for such Mr. Hartley showed himself when national prejudices were not in the way—was the abomination in which an Englishman of the last century held the French. His last proposition was, that the Americans should agree to a truce for ten years, during which Great Britain might continue her war with France, or not; a proposal which it is hardly necessary to say was rejected by Franklin in



terms which marked his opinion of the perfidy and folly of such a course. Mr. Hartley at one time cautioned him to "take care of his own safety." Franklin answered this hint in a brief and characteristic manner: "I thank you for your kind caution, but, having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value upon what remains of it. Like a draper when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am ready to say, 'As it is only a fag end, I will not differ with you about it: take it for what you please.' Perhaps the best use such an old fellow can be put to is to make a martyr of him." The intention of this warning was to make Dr. Franklin jealous and suspicious of the French government; for which purpose he was mysteriously advised that he was constantly under French espionage. This he said he cared nothing about, as he had nothing to conceal. The English government gave pretty good evidence that Franklin's steps had been watched in England, for the agents sent to Paris were, many of them, men who had formerly been his friends. To Mr. Hutton and Mr. Hartley, Mr. (afterward Sir William) Jones was added.

Even the opposition in England sent their emissaries to Paris. The alliance with France had increased the American difficulties into an affair too serious for any means to be left untried to avert its mischiefs. And while Franklin was plied, efforts were also made to tamper with the French court in order that the alliance might be defeated, and one or both of the parties induced to betray the other.

Both, however, remained firm to the last; and the only thing which we have to regret in the history of the relations between the allies is, that jealousy was at length excited, though at a period too late to do any other mischief than to occasion a breach of courtesy.

Franklin kept the French court advised of the advances made to him, and a similar comity was observed by the Count de Vergennes. Copies of a curious letter and manly answer are preserved in the Foreign Archives in Paris, which were transmitted to the Count de Vergennes by Franklin. Mr. Sparks obtained an abstract of one and a copy of the other, and has presented them to the American public in his edition of Franklin's writings. The letter, signed Charles de Weissenstein, was dated at Brussels. Dr. Franklin probably knew more of the writer than he has left any record of; and, in his answer, assumed that he was in Paris instead of Brussels, and that he was an agent of the British government. De Weissenstein wrote with an excess of artifice which defeated itself. He affected a great deal of impartiality, freely condemning the measures of the British ministry, and proposing to forward Dr. Franklin's answer directly to the king, without the intervention of those ministers. He labors to impress Franklin with a bad opinion of French faith; declares the impossibility that England should ever assent to the independence of America, and threatens that, though Parliament should accede to it, the people would not submit;

and that the British title to the empire of America would be asserted by the successors of the men then in power, even though temporarily yielded to "recover breath." He offers peerages to Franklin, Washington, and others, or pensions, at their option, and propounds a plan of government, tolerably specious at the first glance, but which Franklin characterizes in his answer as a proposition for the Americans to deliver themselves "bound and gagged, ready for hanging, without ever a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterward among all mankind."

The reply to his letter M. de Weissenstein desired Franklin to give to, or drop for a stranger, whom he would find the next Monday in the Church of Notre Dame, to be known by a rose in his hat. Franklin says, "I think I can convey my answer in a less mysterious manner, and guess it may come to your hands. \* \* I may be indiscreet enough in many things; but certainly, if I were disposed to make propositions, which I can not do, having none committed to me to make, I should never think of delivering them to the Lord knows who, to be carried to the Lord knows where, to serve no one knows what purposes. Being at this time one of the most remarkable figures in Paris, even my appearance in the Church of Notre Dame, where I can not have any conceivable business, and especially being seen to leave or drop any letter to any person there, would be a matter of some speculation, and might, from the suspicions it must naturally give, have very



mischievous consequences to our credit here." Of the offer of places and peerage, Franklin says, "This offer to corrupt us, sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British court character. It is even the signature of your king." And thus, with contemptuous disdain, Franklin dismissed the promises of the anonymous writer, as with calm courage he had met his threats.

The official and semi-official correspondence of Franklin during his residence in France would of itself have furnished employment sufficient for a man of ordinary habits of application; and yet he found leisure for much besides, in his agreeable personal intercourse and in philosophical pursuits. A great source of annoyance to him was the repeated and incessant demand for letters of introduction to the commander-in-chief in America, or to Congress, the idea having become prevalent that he was sent to France to engage officers. He writes, in relation to this subject, to a friend, with some tartness, though relieved by a touch of pleasantry. "I am worried from morning till night. The noise of every coach now that enters my court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure to meet with some officer or officer's friend, who, as soon as I am put in good humor by a glass or two of Champaign, begins his attack upon me. Luckily, I do not in my sleep dream of these vexatious situations, or I should be afraid of what are now my only hours of comfort. If, therefore, you

have the least remaining kindness for me—if you would not help to drive me out of France, let this, your *twenty-third application*, be your last.”

To such a pitch did the evil grow, that the witty doctor actually prepared a form, which William Temple Franklin states that he certainly used in some instances, to shame applicants out of their importunity, of whom he could get rid in no other way: “The bearer of this presses me to give him a letter of recommendation, though I know nothing of him, not even his name. I must refer you to himself for his character and merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be.” One can imagine the blank looks of an applicant upon reading a testimonial couched in the usual forms, with such a declaration and reference as the above for its pith. Too complaisant listening to applications for employment in the army of the United States was the cause of Mr. Deane’s being recalled by Congress. He left, on his return, in April, 1778, and was succeeded by Mr. John Adams. He had made agreements with French officers which Congress found it impossible to confirm. Franklin wrote more than once in exculpation and vindication of his colleague in this particular; for it was exceedingly difficult, and in many cases would have been impolitic, to refuse applications in which the powerful were interested. Franklin and Deane united in the recommendation of *Lafayette*; and we need remind no American reader that their



eulogy in this case was merited, and their judgment fully vindicated.

Mr. Adams remained in Paris as commissioner only until the autumn of the year in which he arrived. The commission was dissolved, and Dr. Franklin was appointed minister plenipotentiary. Mr. Arthur Lee, the other commissioner, had an appointment to Spain, but remained in Paris. From Mr. Lee, and from Mr. Ralph Izard, Dr. Franklin experienced a great deal of annoyance—and enmity. The first was exhibited in captious differences about the public business, and the personal and official relations of the commissioners; and the latter was excited in letters to America, making charges and insinuations of a weighty character against Franklin. Mr. Lee's unhappy temper toward the doctor was exhibited in England while they were in that country together. He quarreled with his other colleague in France, Mr. Deane, before Franklin's arrival; and he labored to procure the sending of Mr. Deane to



one court and Dr. Franklin to another, leaving himself in France, that he might have an opportunity to call upon them for their accounts, which he thus darkly intimated needed examination; an object which he said could thus be reached without an appearance of intention, and thus, he says, "save both the public and me." We have not space, nor is it necessary, to go into a circumstantial account of all the intrigues to which Dr. Franklin's enemies resorted, and the littlenesses" (an awkward word, but expressive) of which they were capable. Franklin was not unadvised of any part of their proceedings. While he did not permit the public business to be injured by differences between the agents of the United States abroad, he replied with sufficient directness and spirit to direct insults; but, proud in his conscious integrity, he did not attempt to meet or reply to the charges against him which were sent to America, not, be it understood, formally and officially, but to operate on individual minds, and thus procure his injury in Congress without giving him an opportunity to vindicate himself. He expressed his confidence that such injustice would not be done him; and that confidence was well founded. Although some of the members, and other influential men in America, of correct minds and pure patriotism, were to some extent swayed by the efforts, incessant and artful, to injure Franklin, and to make the foreign affairs of the United States appear as if in a desperate condition through his remissness and mismanagement, the truth prevailed. Facts, and the

unsought testimony of the disinterested, showed that Franklin had effected, and was effecting with the court of France, what no other man could. It is related of Jefferson, that when he succeeded Dr. Franklin as minister to France, and some one said to him, "You have come to fill Dr. Franklin's place," he replied, "Oh no, sir; no man living can do that; but I am appointed to succeed him." By repeated proofs of confidence, Congress showed that this opinion was not peculiar to Mr. Jefferson. The verdict of posterity has endorsed that opinion; and if the assailants of Dr. Franklin are remembered, it will be from the character and eminence of the man they attacked, not for any credit that their allegations against him possessed.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER the dissolution of the commission, and the appointment of Dr. Franklin as minister plenipotentiary, his duties, though much more onerous than before, were, however, pursued with more comfort, as he was relieved from the captious interference of a troublesome colleague in Mr. Lee. Mr. Adams, during the time that he remained in France as commissioner, was the hearty assistant and respectful friend of Dr. Franklin. He resided with him in the same house for some time, and the sentiments with which he regarded his venerable colleague may be gathered from his answer to a letter from Mr. Lee, in which the latter desired a room to be prepared in his house for the keeping of the public papers. "I have not asked Dr. Franklin's opinion concerning a room in your house for the papers, and an hour to meet there: I know it would be in vain; for I think it must appear to him more unequal still. It can not be expected that two should go to one, when it is as easy again for one to come to two; not to mention Dr. Franklin's age, his rank in the country, or his character in the world; nor that nine tenths of the public letters are constantly brought to this house, and always will be carried where Dr. Franklin is." And yet Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams did not en-



tirely agree, as will presently be observed. But the difference between the two statesmen was one upon points of policy, naturally growing out of their different characters, and the different positions from which they viewed the same subjects; a difference, the result of honest convictions, which was restrained by the patriotism which they both possessed, and the willingness which both felt to make sacrifices for their country. The other opposition to Franklin was in its inception, at least, prompted by mortified personal vanity, and grasping, but disappointed ambition.

To Dr. Franklin's duties as minister plenipotentiary were added all others which are usually transacted by subordinate representatives of a government abroad. Consular duties, the adjudication of questions arising out of the capture of the enemy's vessels; disputes between commanders in the American service; complaints of neutrals against alleged violations of national law, and the provision of money to meet the drafts of Congress, all were, by turns, demanding his attention; and the admiration is, that even Franklin performed these multifarious duties so well. Not a draft drawn by authority of Congress was protested during his residence abroad. In these duties he had not even the assistance of a secretary of legation. His grandson was his scribe and assistant. It was not until near the close of his official residence abroad that consuls were appointed. And while all this official work was passing through his hands, the reader must bear in mind the voluminous

correspondence which he held with friends in England, and others, as already mentioned; through all of which he adhered to his strongly expressed declaration, that Americans "were neither to be *dragooned* nor *bamboozled* out of their liberty;" that independence was theirs already, and that no treaty could be commenced without the acknowledgment, tacit or verbal, of this fact.

The whole sum of money obtained by Franklin from the French court was from twenty-seven to thirty millions of francs. Of this, nine were considered a free gift, or subsidy, and the remainder, it was agreed between the Count de Vergennes and Franklin, should be paid in twelve annual instalments, the first to be paid in three years after the close of the war. To these sums the French court added another loan of six millions, after the signing of the treaty. Without disparagement to the labors or character of any one else, we may infer that no other agent would have been so successful. De Vergennes writes in 1780, "We esteem Dr. Franklin as much for the patriotism as the wisdom of his conduct; and it has been owing, in a great part, to this cause, and to the confidence which we put in his veracity, that we have determined to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments in which he has been placed by Congress." And at a period when the heavy expenses of the war, and the liberal advances already made, had crippled the resources of the French government, Franklin secured a loan in Holland by seconding the application of his colleagues to the

French court, and thus obtaining the guarantee of the French king for the payment of the interest of the sum advanced from that quarter. Drafts drawn upon foreign ministers at other courts were, through the influence of Franklin, saved from being dishonored; and, in a word, his services to his country, in a financial character alone, entitled him to her highest gratitude.

Franklin was an advocate of the plan of dispatching a French army to America, as recommended by Lafayette on his first return from the United States, and seconded the marquis with his influence and counsel. It was his happiness to be the agent through whom the sword voted by Congress for that officer was procured and presented to him, and he exercised his usual good taste and judgment in the selection of the emblems and devices.

Jealous of the honor of his country, he issued a circular letter to the American cruisers for the protection of Captain Cook, on his return from his voyage of discovery, and another for the safety of the vessels dispatched with relief to the Moravian missions, and alms for sufferers in the West India colonies. When France and Spain joined with Russia in the recognition of the new principle that "free ships make free goods," or that the flag of a neutral covers the cargo, Franklin issued instructions to the American cruisers accordingly. All the Northern powers except England came into the arrangement. Franklin assumed the assent of Congress in this, as he did in many other cases, but



never in any case when he had not with him the support of the principles of equity and of humanity

Through the whole residence of Franklin abroad, it was his peculiar fortune to be, at least, partially misunderstood at home. The impression grew that he was too much a Frenchman; that he was too complaisant, not to say obsequious, to the French court. Even if there were some color for this allegation, it would be a circumstance not at all to be wondered at. None knew so well as he what essential services the French court had rendered to the Americans, and were still rendering; for he declared that the Count de Vergennes never made a promise which he did not redeem. None so well understood as Dr. Franklin what continued efforts were made to influence the councils of France by indirect means and overtures from the common enemy, for he had experience of the same tortuous policy in his own case. And if, in addition to the national reasons for gratitude, he had some personal feeling for the respect entertained for him by both court and people, he would have been cold-hearted and ungrateful indeed not to have exhibited this sentiment. But in no case did he compromise his duty, or fail in the service of his country. We have observed how much he was embarrassed in England, while agent of the colonies, by the movements of the patriots at home. In France, the doings of his countrymen in Congress required him, if he would be at all successful, to be their apologist at the French court. In England he was blamed for the

revolutionary speeches and manifestoes of his countrymen; and in France, a point in his public course, of which De Vergennes made serious complaint, was, that he did not discourage the frequent and importunate demands which Congress made for assistance. In neither of these cases could he have done more, nowever, than he really did; and what he did effect or advance in his correspondence, caused his enemies to make him appear, while in England, too much an Englishman; while in France, too much a Frenchman. Posterity has, however, done him justice; and even while he lived, he had the good fortune to find his conduct truly appreciated, and to be honored with renewed marks of public confidence, which were an answer to his enemies as complete as gratifying.

Dr. Franklin thought his powers as minister plenipotentiary not ample enough to enable him to conclude a treaty of peace, should opportunity present itself. Mr. Adams was therefore appointed minister for this purpose, and arrived in France in 1780. Count de Vergennes and Mr. Adams differed upon some points of etiquette, and upon some of more importance. The count desired a copy of his instructions as minister to make a treaty with England, which Mr. Adams did not feel inclined to communicate. Mr. Adams also insisted that the depreciation of the continental paper money in America should equally affect all creditors, foreign and domestic, while Count de Vergennes claimed that an exception should be made in favor of French credit-

ors. The situation of Mr. Adams in Paris became so irksome that he repaired to Holland, where he remained until he came to Paris with the others named in the commission to negotiate the treaty of peace with Great Britain. While in Holland he took the place of Mr. Laurens in the endeavor to negotiate loans in that country; and in this business, among his embarrassments, he had to contend with adverse intrigues, as is alleged, of the French court. The question whether this charge against France was well or ill founded, it is not necessary to consider here; it is sufficient that circumstances were such as warranted Mr. Adams, in his own mind, in entertaining suspicions of France, and opinions of her course, far less favorable than Dr. Franklin did. The French government even requested his recall; but Congress, instead, passed him a vote of thanks. Of course, these circumstances operated to the prejudice of Dr. Franklin at home, as he was unreserved in expressing, in his official letters, the difference between himself and Mr. Adams on the attitude which should be maintained toward France. The question of the recall of Dr. Franklin had been once (1779) broached in Congress, and only eight votes in forty-three were found in favor of it. In 1781 he solicited to be recalled, not from "any the least doubt of their success in their glorious cause, or any disgust received in their service, but on account of his age and infirmities." Congress declined accepting his resignation; and, as a further mark of confidence, he was associated with Mr. Laurens,



Mr. Jay, and Mr. Jefferson, in a commission with Mr. Adams, to negotiate a treaty of peace with Great Britain. He could not be insensible to this confidence. The assurance that he had tendered his resignation from "no disgust" is emphatic, when considered in reference to the circumstances which we have reviewed. It is of a kindred character with his former declaration, made to Lord Howe, that he never suffered private grievances to interfere with public duties. He remained to fulfill, even to the last, his generous devotedness to his country, and to throw himself as a peacemaker between France and America; not, indeed, that there was any danger of a rupture, though coldness did for a time mark the official intercourse of the representatives of the two governments.

In 1782, upon the commencement of the Rockingham ministry, which had come into power with the express declaration of the policy of peace with America, an official correspondence was opened with the venerable man who for more than ten years may be said to have been the point of *quasi* diplomatic advances. Thus, as a matter of course, was precedence ever conferred upon him, in whatever he was engaged. In April, diplomatic agents were sent to Paris to confer with Dr. Franklin and the French court on the mode of conducting the negotiation. After three months of conversation and skirmishing, Dr. Franklin's colleagues not having arrived, the following points were submitted as the indispensable basis of negotiation: Full and com

plete acknowledgment of the independence of the thirteen states; withdrawal of the British forces; settlement of boundaries, and freedom of the fisheries. To these indispensable articles Dr. Franklin added certain recommendations as *advisable*: indemnification for towns burned; a conciliatory act of Parliament; the surrender of Canada, and equal privileges with British ships in British ports.

While the preliminary conversations were going forward, the British ministry was dissolved by the death of the Marquis of Rockingham. The Earl of Shelbourne succeeded as prime minister, and Mr. Fox, who had been in the Rockingham cabinet, retired. Mr. Jay had by this time arrived in Paris. Mr. Adams came in October, about a month before the signature, though he was in correspondence with his colleagues during their preliminary negotiations. Mr. Laurens, who had been for over a year a prisoner in the Tower in London, arrived only to endorse what his colleagues had done. Mr. Jefferson never acted under his appointment to negotiate the treaty of peace, but remained in America, as he learned that the preliminaries were arranged before he was ready to embark. The greater portion of the labor was thus left to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay. As the former, for several weeks during the summer of 1782, was confined to his house by sickness, the negotiations were conducted by Mr. Jay and Mr. Oswald, the English ambassador, or agent.

The change of ministry in Great Britain pro-

tracted the discussion. The original intention of the parties was to assume the independence of the United States as an admitted fact, and then proceed to treat as with an independent power. But the new ministry desired to make the independence of America a matter of exchange, for which an *equivalent* was to be granted by the United States. Mr. Jay combated this from the beginning; and with the keenness of a lawyer, demurred to Mr. Oswald's instructions, in which every thing which could recognize the national existence of the United States had been left out. After consultation with Dr. Franklin, and the dispatch of couriers and messages between London and Paris, the difficulty was got over by a compromise. Two commissioners were sent over to Paris from London, which were at first Mr. Grenville and Mr. Oswald. Mr. Grenville's commission authorized him to treat with France; but as America was not mentioned, Dr. Franklin refused to consider him as empowered to treat with the United States. The commission was altered to read "France, or any other prince or state." Dr. Franklin said that the general words any other state could not include a people whom Great Britain did not allow to be a state. Mr. Grenville was succeeded by Mr. Fitzherbert, whose commission was to treat with France, Spain, and Holland. Mr. Oswald remained in charge of the American treaty, and with him Mr. Jay contended until his authority to treat was changed from the words "with commissioners named, or to be named, by the colonies or plant-



ations of America," to commissioners of the "thirteen United States."

The preliminary treaty was signed at Paris on the 30th of November, 1782. The stipulations about commerce, originally contemplated by Dr. Franklin, were left for another treaty; all the other "essentials" were secured. But a great effort was made by the British commissioners to obtain compensation for the Loyalists whose property had been confiscated, or to retain the fisheries. On these points the American commissioners were resolute; and Mr. Adams arrived from Holland to throw his weight into the scale, and combat with energy any attempt to depart from the basis which Franklin had marked out, and he had approved. In regard to the compensation of the Loyalists, Franklin's witty anecdote of *the poker* indicates his opinion of the justice of the claim. He represents a man as having prepared the heated iron for thrusting his neighbor through; and when the person for whom the compliment was intended declined it, even to the extent of only one inch, the man who had heated the poker set up a claim for his time and fuel. After all attempts to obtain more than had in the beginning been conceded were found vain, the British commissioners yielded. The last stand made was on the Loyalist claims and the fisheries; and the commissioners on the part of Great Britain threatened to send the treaty to London for consideration. Dr. Franklin acceded to this, provided a clause was inserted making it obligatory on the king to rec-

commend to Parliament a bill to indemnify the Americans for British spoliations. This proposition closed the contest, and the treaty was signed. It was a subject of complaint, not official or formal, but of conversation and remark, that the American commissioners should affix their signatures without consulting the French ministry. The reason for this proceeding was the jealousy of diplomacy. The British court, as it had done through the whole war, through its agents, excited distrust of France. Accidental circumstances, since proved of no weight, added their force to suspicion; and the natural desire of the French court, that the negotiation should not be frustrated and the war protracted, gave color to the charge that the French ministry was indisposed to support America in all her claims. It is to be remembered, however, that the preliminary treaty, thus signed by the commissioners of the United States, was conditioned upon the negotiation of a treaty between England and France, for the United States steadily refused to make any separate treaty. Both France and America kept their faith to each other in this respect. But it was a time of doubt and uncertainty. Fears were entertained of the sincerity of the British court, as propositions for a separate peace had been presented to France, to Spain, and to the United States; and the offer of mediation from Russia, on behalf of Holland, had been accepted. All these considerations induced the commissioners to sign the preliminary treaty while it was in their power.

In reference to the subject of this treaty, Dr. Franklin wrote to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, "I will not take it upon me to justify the apparent reserve respecting this court (the French) at the signature of which you disapprove. I do not see, however, that they have much reason to complain of the transaction. Nothing was stipulated to their prejudice, and none of the stipulations were to have force except by a subsequent act of their own. \* \* \*

I long since satisfied Count de Vergennes about it here. He did what appeared to all of us best at the time; and, if we have done wrong, the Congress will do right, after hearing us, to censure us. Their nomination of five persons to the service seems to mark that they had some dependence on our joint judgment, since one alone could have made a treaty by direction of the French ministry as well as twenty." The wisdom of the commissioners in their preliminary stipulations, and the completeness with which those articles covered the whole ground, is shown in the fact that the preliminary articles were, on the 3d of September, 1783, signed as the definitive treaty. Efforts were made to introduce a commercial article; but, after much deliberation, this and other subjects were left for after consideration; and the treaty, as signed, met the full and hearty approval of the American Congress and people.

Thus closed the last great event of Franklin's official life. What follows in his public acts is overshadowed by the vast importance of the events which he had been so active an instrument in bring-



ing about. Americans are not inclined to do injustice to their public men, particularly those who figured in the great contest of the Revolution; but injustice has unintentionally been done to Benjamin Franklin. He has been regarded rather as the philosopher than as the statesman; or, in other words, his scientific reputation has been made to supersede his patriotic labors and services. Particularly has this been the case in popular biographies; and we have therefore followed his most important public acts with the more minuteness, that his countrymen may become generally better aware of what is due, in this respect, to the American statesman.

Pending the negotiations with England, Dr. Franklin was appointed a special commissioner to negotiate a treaty with Sweden, which duty he performed. He was also, after the treaty of peace, named in two commissions: one with Messrs. Adams and Jay, to negotiate a treaty of commerce with England; the other with Messrs. Adams and Jefferson, to contract treaties of amity and commerce with the principal European powers. Nothing was effected under the first commission. Under the second, a treaty was made with Prussia, which embraced a clause against privateering, and in favor of the principles of mercy and equity, by which Franklin proposed to regulate hostile operations. His last official act was to sign this treaty, and in July, 1785, he was succeeded by Mr. Jefferson as minister plenipotentiary. He was now in his eigh

tieth year. Public life had lost its zest, from the fact that no great interests remained in jeopardy. He had lived to see the "hazardous enterprise," as he termed the Revolution, "happily completed;" and urged upon Congress, in repeated applications, his recall, being willing to leave to younger hands the arrangement of the details, for which his labors of tongue and pen had aided to lay so solid a foundation.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

VERY soon after the arrival of Franklin in France, he took lodgings in a house belonging to M. Chaumont, at Passy, near Paris. As he remained in the same house during his whole official residence in England, so he kept the same quarters during his whole residence in France. These little circumstances are strongly illustrative of his character. He took no step without due consideration; and sought through his whole life rather to accommodate himself to present circumstances, or to improve those circumstances by gradual and rational steps, than to look for or seek great changes. We observe the same traits in his political character. As decidedly republican as any of his compeers, in all points in advance of many of them in opinion, and in some few points in advance of all, he never advocated the abrupt removal of existing institutions, trusting to the future to supply their places. The plan was to build up before he pulled down; to let the new win favor and supplant the old, rather than by removal of the old, to compel the adoption of new. If there be any propriety in such a conjunction of terms, he may be styled a *conservative democrat*, in opposition to those who are termed the movement party.



In his course upon religious questions we may observe the like characteristics of mind. Throughout his whole life he acknowledged habitually his dependence upon an overruling Providence, and declared it to be not only the personal duty of individuals, but the duty of nations in their public acts and in their official proceedings, to recognize the Supreme Ruler of nations. In the Convention which met in 1787 to form the Constitution of the United States, he made an eloquent appeal to his colleagues in support of a motion which he introduced, that "henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business." He treated the sacred Scriptures with habitual reverence, and in many places has recorded his faith in them; and his writings and conversation showed that he was intimately acquainted with their contents. He urged upon those dependent upon him an habitual attention to public worship; and if, in some part of his life, as left by himself, he does not seem to have been exemplary in that particular, whose life *is* always in accordance with his precepts? He had the near friendship of Whitefield, the Bishop of St. Asaph's, and other clergymen and devout Christians—persons who would not have sought the society of an irreligious man. And he possessed in an eminent degree the grace of charity, as he has left the evidence both in his writings and in his acts. In some of his opinions upon theological subjects he was unsettled; in some points

he acknowledges he had doubts. "To his own master he standeth or falleth." But he never intruded his doubts or his speculative opinions upon others. He never attempted to disturb any man's faith; and he most earnestly urged the celebrated Thomas Paine to burn the manuscript of a deistical work which he submitted to Franklin for perusal—to burn it before it met the eye of any other person, and thus save himself a good deal of regret and repentance. "By your argument," Franklin says, "against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundation of all religion; for, without the belief of a Providence that takes cognizance of, guards and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection."

As among the proofs of the extraordinary activity of his mind, it may be remarked that he learned to converse in the French language after he had reached the age of seventy. Among the "bagatelles," as he termed them, written at Passy for the amusement of the brilliant coterie with whom he was associated, are several written in French; and this fact leads to the inference that light literature was not the only mode in which he employed his pen in French composition. His attachment to the press is exhibited in the fact that he had a small printing-office at his lodgings, with which he amused himself in printing these trifles, and in getting up ingenious and harmless pasquinades. Many of his



practical essays, and not a few political papers, memoirs on various philosophical subjects, were written during his residence in France. His principal philosophical and miscellaneous works were published in Paris in 1773, and the famous preface to his Almanac in 1757. "The Way to Wealth" had been distributed among the people in a separate translation. That exceedingly clever collection of "wise saws" has since enjoyed the honor of being translated and published in modern Greek. Without any official rank, the American philosopher would have found sufficient occupation to prevent time from hanging heavy on his hands; and in the pleasures of social intercourse and the gratification of scientific pursuits, he found relaxation from the fatigues of his public duties—duties for which, as we have before remarked, the American people, losing sight of the statesman in the sage, have not been sufficiently grateful.

On the 12th of July, 1785, after a residence of



nearly nine years in France, he left Passy on his way to Havre de Grace. He had contemplated a tour over the Continent, and, in particular, a visit to Vienna, but the increasing infirmities of age compelled him to abandon the intention. The leave-takings of his numerous personal friends, and the sincere expressions of friendship and attachment which were incorporated in the notes and adieux of official personages, must have made the sundering of the many agreeable ties he had formed a depressing duty even to a young man, much more to an octogenarian like Franklin, so sensible of kindness, and grateful for it. The journey from Passy was made in the queen's litter, borne by Spanish mules; and the voyage across the Atlantic would have been made in a French national vessel, had the minister of marine been earlier apprised of his intended return. Of the journey to Havre, which occupied six days, Franklin has left notes, in which those who accompanied him and waited upon him with civilities, including individuals, corporations, and the Masonic Lodge at Rouen, are particularly remembered. From Havre he sailed for Southampton, where he remained four days. Here he found his son, William Temple, former governor of New Jersey, who, as a Loyalist, had removed to England; Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, Mr. Alexander, the Bishop of St. Asaph, his lady and daughter, and other friends. With the exchange of courtesies and the transaction of business, the short time of his stay in Southampton was well crowded with occupation.

The most curious incident of the four days is, that the old gentleman of eighty, who had been, as appears in his memoirs, so great a master of the art of swimming, fell asleep floating in a bath, and remained asleep for an hour without sinking or turning—the best practical proof of his theory of self-command in the water. On the 27th of July he embarked in the London Packet, Captain Truxton. The bishop and family accompanied him on board, and remained during the night before the vessel sailed. An evidence of their considerate kindness to their aged friend is found in his journal, under the date of July 28th: “When I waked in the morning, found the company gone and the ship under sail.”

On the passage, which occupied forty-eight days, Dr. Franklin employed himself in writing two papers, one on Smoky Chimneys, the other on Improvements in Navigation. Both were read before the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. In both are many excellent suggestions, which have been made the basis of many practical improvements. In the paper on Navigation occurs the following sentence: “Some sailors may think the writer has given himself unnecessary trouble in pretending to advise them, for they have a little repugnance to the advice of landsmen, whom they esteem ignorant, and incapable of giving any worth notice.” This charge is in part true, but only in part. Contrivances, and machinery, liable at all times to get out of order, are especially so at sea, and seamen alone can judge of what is practically useful and al-

ways *reliable*, which is the main point. The doctor says that when a shipwrecked crew find themselves in a boat without a compass, a fine sewing-needle laid on a cup of clear water will be a good substitute. But a crew who leave in such haste as to forget a compass, would not be very likely to remember a fine sewing-needle; nor is a cup of clear water always to be had by seamen in such a strait; and even if it were, the motion of a boat on the ocean, if it permitted the water to remain in the cup, would occasion variations of the impromptu compass, to which the calculations intended for the perfect instrument would hardly apply. The observations of the doctor on the Gulf Stream, the direction of winds, and many other subjects, are full of useful suggestions, which the good sense of mariners has not been remiss in improving and appropriating. The following is the last entry in the journal of the voyage:

*Wednesday, Sept. 14.*—With the flood in the morning came a light breeze, which brought us above Gloucester Point, in full view of dear Philadelphia! when we again cast anchor, to wait for the health officer, who, having made his visit, and finding no sickness, gave us leave to land. My son-in-law came with a boat for us. We landed at Market-street wharf, where we were received by a crowd of people with huzzas, and accompanied with acclamations quite to my door. Found my family well. God be praised and thanked for all his mercies!"



The ringing of bells and the firing of cannon also expressed the welcome of the people to him who had fought the battles of his country against diplomatic intrigue, while his compatriots defended the liberty of the new nation with their arms. This spontaneous manifestation was followed by others more formal, from the Legislature then in session, from the Philosophical Society, the Faculty of the University, and other public bodies. Individuals hastened also to pay their respects, and among those who earliest called upon him was General Washington. This great man neglected no opportunity during the remainder of Franklin's life of testifying his respect for him; and Franklin, in a codicil to his will, dated in 1789, gives his favorite walking-stick to General Washington, designating him as "my friend and the friend of mankind." "If it were a sceptre," he adds, "he has merited it, and would become it."

In a few days after his return, Dr. Franklin was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and in October he was chosen President of the State, as the executive was termed under the then existing Constitution. He filled this office through the three successive years which the Constitution allowed, receiving on his first election all the votes of the Legislature except one, and at the two subsequent elections a unanimous vote. In pursuance of an opinion which he entertained, that in a republican government there should be no emolument attached to office, he devoted his salary to

purposes of public utility; and in his will gave so much more to public purposes, that if a balance were struck between what he received during his long public service and what he expended, the credit side would show largely in favor of the doctor. It is a matter of deep regret that the private claims of Benjamin Franklin are among those which were never adjusted by Congress. His accounts as commissioner, minister, &c., at the court of France, were audited by the agent appointed by Congress before he left France; but as there were some points upon which the agent did not feel empowered to admit Franklin's claims, the account was transmitted open to Congress. About seven thousand five hundred livres were found due to Franklin, which he received. The unadjusted part was made up of his reasonable demands for extra services. By the terms of Franklin's appointment, he was to receive his expenses and a net salary of five hundred pounds, and to have a secretary with a salary of one thousand pounds. The secretary never was sent; and the whole labor of his appointment devolved upon himself and his grandson, who received only three hundred pounds per annum. Dr. Franklin urged the subject upon the attention of Congress without success. One reason which he advanced for attention to it no longer exists. His enemies circulated reports that he was largely indebted to government, and that he avoided a settlement. This slander was long since forgotten, as there never was any foundation for it: posterity has done justice to his

memory; and it is a better record for his time that he died the creditor of his country, than if he had amassed wealth in her service. The difficulty which has always been found in pressing private claims upon the attention of Congress, relieves this case from any appearance of singularity; and the unsettled state of that body at the close of the session, before the meeting of the first Congress under the new Constitution, was a sufficient cause for the neglect. Indeed, after the letter which Franklin wrote to the President of Congress, dated in 1788, the members never assembled in a number sufficient to form a quorum. In the first Congress under the new Constitution, which assembled March 4, 1789, there was abundance of business in the organization of the new government; and it does not appear that Dr. Franklin ever renewed his application to that body. Franklin, in a letter to a friend, says: "He did hope that Congress would at least have been kind enough to have shown their approbation of his conduct by a grant of a small tract of land in their Western country, which might have been of use, and some honor to his posterity." The honor has been granted in every state of the Union, for in each, in the names of counties or towns, or both, his is preserved—the free-will offering of the people; and countless societies bear his honored "style and title." Could he realize the wish he once expressed, to revisit earth in a hundred years after his decease, he would find no room to complain of the ingratitude of his countrymen.



Dr. Franklin was chosen by Pennsylvania one of her delegates to the Convention for adopting a Constitution for the United States, which met in May, 1787, at Philadelphia, and was a working member of that body. Its sessions were secret, but in 1819 the Journal of the Convention was published by order of Congress. Franklin's speeches were short and pertinent; for he was at home in the committee-room rather than in the deliberative assembly, and never aimed at the fame of an orator. It is curious to note that in the speeches which were afterward written out and published, Dr. Franklin appears usually to have advocated measures which were overruled by the Convention. He favored the establishment of an Executive Council rather than a single officer as the head of the government. He would have had the executive hold office for the honor, without salary; and in these two provisions he thought that a guard would be provided against the change of the republican government of the United States into a monarchy. He said, "I am apprehensive—perhaps too apprehensive—that the government of these states may in future times end in a monarchy. But this catastrophe may be long delayed, if, in our proposed system, we do not sow the seeds of contention, faction, and tumult, by making our posts of honor places of profit. If we do, I fear that, though we employ at first a number, and not a single person, the number will in time be set aside: it will only nourish the germ of a king, and a king will be the sooner set over us." Could he re-visit

the United States, in accordance with his wish already referred to, he would see the non-fulfillment of that prophecy, and find the wisdom of his last speech in the Convention confirmed. In that speech he confessed that he did not entirely approve of the Constitution, but he was not sure that he should *never* approve it. The older he grew, the more apt he was to doubt his own judgment. Many persons, he said, think highly of their own infallibility, but few express it so naturally as a certain French lady, who, in a little dispute with her sister, said, "But I meet with nobody but myself that is *always* in the right." He consented to the Constitution because he expected no better, and was not sure that it was not the best, sacrificing his opinion of its errors to the public good; and he therefore expressed the hope that all who still had objections to it, would, like him, doubt a little of his own infallibility, and, to make manifest the unanimity of the Convention, put their names to the instrument. The formula, "Done in Convention by the unanimous consent," &c., was agreed to, and added accordingly. Nor was Franklin's defense of the Constitution a mere cold assent, for it was after this period that he wrote the famous "*Comparison of the Conduct of the Ancient Jews and the Anti-Federalists of the United States*," referred to in a preceding chapter.

In the year 1788, besides the "Comparison" above mentioned, Dr. Franklin wrote nearly one half of his autobiography, and some scientific papers. In 1789 he wrote a long memoir upon the subject of



the Academy, now the University of Pennsylvania; and a satirical paper on the Abuses of the Press, which agent he termed "The Supremest Court of Judicature in Pennsylvania." He drew up a Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks, and wrote an Address to the Public from the "Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery," of which society he was president. His last published paper appeared in the Federal Gazette of March 25th, 1790, over the signature of "Historicus," and purported to be a speech delivered in the Divan of Algiers in 1687 by a member of that council, against the petition of a sect called *Erika*, who prayed the abolition of slavery. It was a parody upon a speech delivered in Congress upon the same subject, and is remarkable as the production of a man in his eighty-fifth year, having all the freshness and vivacity of style, and the skillfulness of application for which his productions are notable. It was dated only twenty-four days before his death. His last public act was the signature, as President of the Abolition Society, of a memorial to Congress. His last letter, of which any copy has been preserved—and, from its date, probably the last which he wrote—is one addressed to Jefferson, the Secretary of State, upon the subject of the Northeastern Boundary. This letter bears date April 8, 1790, nine days before his decease, and gives proofs of a clearness of mind and memory truly wonderful.

During the last years of his life, feeling perhaps that his attention to politics was no longer neces-



sary, he delighted in conversation on philosophical subjects, and upon the objects of philanthropy, which ever had his countenance. He fitted up his house and library with that attention to convenience and utility which was ever a principle with him, from its enabling him to observe economy of time; and surrounded himself with the trophies of his long public life in the medals, busts, curiosities, diplomas, and presents of various descriptions—memorials which all had a value in his eyes, as was shown by his distribution of them by will to different friends. In his conversations upon philosophical and other subjects, as he himself informs us, and as his writings show, it was his habit never to *dogmatize*. Of his philosophical writings it has been well observed, that the most remarkable thing in them “is the unparalleled simplicity and facility with which the reader is conducted from one stage of the inquiry to another. The author never appears for a moment to labor or to be at a loss. The most ingenious and profound explanations are suggested, as if they were the most natural and obvious way of accounting for the phenomena; and the author seems to value himself so little on his most important discoveries, that it is necessary to compare him with others before we can form a just notion of his merits.” He appears to have made no secret of his processes, or of his discoveries at any point in the progress of his experiments; and he thus admitted the curious and ingenious in all parts of the world to participate in his investigations, freely imparting his own discov-

eries, and candidly acknowledging the hints he derived from others. His proposed experiments to establish the identity of lightning with electricity required a tower such as did not exist in Philadelphia. He published his views: French philosophers established their correctness in the manner he proposed; while with the memorable and familiarly known expedient of the kite, he completed his experiment in America. Had he done and published nothing except what he effected in relation to the science of electricity, his name would still be immortal.

His discoveries and acquirements procured him membership of all the principal learned and scientific societies in the world; for there never has existed a man whose cotemporaneous reputation was more literally world-wide than his. These honors were unsolicited, as were other tokens of respect—some of which were the reward of his science—as the notice of the King of France, communicated through the Royal Society of London, for his electrical discoveries, while he was plain Mr. Franklin, of Philadelphia; some were the reward of his philanthropy, like the copy of Cook's Voyages, and the medal, sent him with the approbation of the King of England, for his humane order to the American cruizers in relation to the vessels of the great navigator; and others still—and their number was immense—were tokens of individual respect for his talents and his virtues. The latter class of testimonials included every variety of the curious and the valuable in

nature and in art, and copies of new works on all subjects.

With the close of Dr. Franklin's third year as President of Pennsylvania, in 1788, his official life terminated; but people could not forbear consultation with one who for more than fifty years had been familiar with the politics and history of his country, and whose varied knowledge, the result of observation and experience, was so ample. While the question of the adoption of the Constitution was pending in the several states, and as far back as the time when the election of delegates to the Convention was in progress, a society was formed "for Political Inquiries," of which Franklin was president, and which met at his house. But it became finally absorbed in the desultory and informal conversations which his fellow-citizens delighted to hold with a man whose conversational powers acute disease seemed hardly to diminish, and whose faculties years appeared little to impair.

Dr. Franklin, throughout his long life, enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health until the few years which preceded his decease. In stature he was well formed and compact, in countenance cheerful and intelligent; for his familiar face, preserved in countless copies, is an index of his character. He was an example and apostle of temperance when the customs of society tended to an opposite course; and in this mode he preserved health and endured fatigue. Toward the close of his life, and particularly during his residence in France, his personal



nabits became less active; and his fondness for the society which sought him out, together with the confinement of his official duties, precluded the exercise which he had formerly taken as a preservative of health. He was afflicted with gout, to which, in 1782, a severe calculous complaint was added; and, though enjoying occasional respites, the two diseases at length became so continual as for the last twelve months of his life to confine him almost constantly to his bed. In a letter written to President Washington in the autumn of 1789, he says: "For my own personal ease I should have died two years ago; but, though those years have been passed in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation." Dr. John Jones, his physician and friend, wrote the following account of his last sickness and death:

"The stone, with which he had been afflicted for several years, had, for the last twelve months of his life, confined him chiefly to his bed; and, during the extremely painful paroxysms, he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures. Still, in the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself by reading and conversing cheerfully with his family and a few friends who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public as well as of a private nature, with various persons who waited upon him for that purpose; and in every instance displayed not only the readiness and disposition to do good, which were the distinguish-

ing characteristics of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon abilities. He also not unfrequently indulged in those *jeux d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes which were the delight of all who heard them.

“About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish disposition, without any particular symptoms attending it till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended by a cough and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought; acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men; and made no doubt but that his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind he continued until five days before his death, when the pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery, but an imposthume which had formed in his lungs suddenly burst and discharged a quantity of matter, which he continued to throw up while he had power; but, as that failed, the organs of respiration became gradually oppressed; a calm, lethargic state succeeded; and on the 17th instant (April, 1790),

about eleven o'clock at night, he quietly expired, closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months."\*

The public mind was not unprepared for an event which had been daily looked for, but the tidings fell with a sensible gloom upon the city. The newspapers announced the event with the insignia of mourning around their borders, and all classes and conditions prepared with one consent to render the last honors to the illustrious deceased. The last paragraph of his will (except the formula of revocation of previous ones) expressed his desire that his body should be buried "with as little expense or ceremony as may be." This bound his executors; but the public could not be repressed in the enthusiasm of respect, and the mournful testimony of regret and veneration. The funeral took place on the 21st of April, and his remains were placed, according to his request, at the side of those of his wife, in the northwest corner of Christ Church Cemetery. The bells of the city were muffled and tolled; the flags of the shipping in the harbor, and flags upon the public buildings, were displayed at half-mast; and when the body was committed to the earth, peals of artillery announced that all that was mortal of the sage and the philanthropist had

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\* Three days previous to his death, he desired his daughter, Mrs. Bache, to have his bed made, "*in order that he might die in a decent manner.*" His daughter having replied that she hoped he would recover and live many years, he said, "*I hope not.*" On another day, being advised to change his position, that he might breathe easy, he replied, "*A dying man can do nothing easy.*"



been consigned to the keeping of the tomb. An immense concourse, including the public bodies of the state and city, societies and corporations of various names, followed the body in procession, and, with the citizens who closed the long funereal train, the number could not have been less than twenty thousand persons. Without the attraction of a military pageant, and without the prelude of any formal arrangements, the heart of the whole people united in this testimony of respect and affection; and the funeral of Benjamin Franklin was in keeping with the whole tenor of his life, a spectacle as sublime as unostentatious.

Congress was in session in New York at the time of Franklin's death. On receipt of the intelligence, a resolution was passed that the members should wear the customary badge of mourning one month, as a mark of the veneration due to the memory of a citizen "whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature than his various exertions of it have been to science, to freedom, and to his country." When the decease of the philosopher and statesman was known in France, it was announced in the National Assembly by M. Mirabeau the elder, who proposed, after a burst of eulogy full of the spirit of that age and the enthusiasm of a Frenchman, that the Assembly should wear mourning for three days, to "participate in the homage rendered in the face of the universe to the rights of man, and to the philosopher who has so eminently propagated the conquest of them throughout the world." The

proposition was seconded by Rochefoucauld and Lafayette, and adopted by acclamation. It was also resolved that the address of Mirabeau should be printed, and that a letter of condolence should be addressed to the Congress of the United States. This duty was performed by the President of the Assembly; and upon the receipt of the letter, Congress, by resolution, desired President Washington to "communicate to the National Assembly of France the peculiar sensibility of Congress to the tribute paid to the memory of Benjamin Franklin by the enlightened and free representatives of a great nation;" and Washington, in his answer, happily acknowledged this peculiar proof of national courtesy.

The honors to Franklin in France did not cease with the proceedings of the National Assembly. Several years before, Turgot had applied to him the stately but epigrammatic eulogy,

*"Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis."*

Mirabeau, in his speech in the Assembly, paraphrased the same idea, terming Franklin "the mortal who, for the advantage of the human race, embracing both heaven and earth in his vast and extensive mind, knew how to subdue thunder and tyranny." The authorities of the city of Paris ordered a public celebration in honor of the memory of Franklin; and the rotunda of the Corn-market, hung with black, was crowded with an auditory wearing the same insignia, who listened to a eulogy pronounced by the Abbé Fauchet. If the Latin verse of Turgot lost force by Mirabeau's French translation, the sen

timent adopted by the people regained its strength, if not all its imposing dignity, by the vividly acted commentary of the nation. Societies, corporations, and individuals united in the display of that enthusiasm which is so peculiarly the characteristic of the French people.

The Philadelphia Library Company, which had its origin in the efforts of Franklin nearly sixty years before, left a niche in the front of their new building, then in progress of erection, for a statue of the philosopher. The statue was placed there in 1792 by the liberality of William Bingham, a citizen of Philadelphia. It is of Carrara marble, and was the first piece of sculpture of its size which was brought to this country. The costume is the toga; the left arm is supported by books, and in the left hand is a scroll. In the right is an inverted sceptre. The Philosophical Society appointed Dr. William Smith to deliver a eulogy; and at Yale College, New Haven, a Latin Oration was pronounced by President Stiles.

Such were some of the honors paid to Franklin at his decease. No monument marks his resting-place, for he had by will prescribed a plain marble slab; but, better than any other memorial, his name lives in the records of science, the history of nations, the gratitude of his countrymen, the respect of mankind. In this connection we append an epitaph, which he wrote for himself at the age of twenty-three, which looks to a further remembrance than any earthly tribute:



“The Body  
Of  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,  
Printer  
(Like the cover of an old book,  
Its contents torn out,  
And stripped of its lettering and gilding),  
Lies here, food for worms.  
But the work shall not be lost,  
‘or it will, as he believed, appear once more,  
In a new and more elegant edition,  
Revised and corrected  
By  
THE AUTHOR.”

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In Franklin's will, besides the distribution of his property and various memorials among kindred, friends, and the societies of which he was a member, he left one thousand pounds to the city of Philadelphia, and the same sum to the town of Boston, to be loaned in small sums to young married mechanics. The sum bequeathed to Philadelphia is now estimated to be worth about seventeen thousand dollars; the Boston legacy about twenty-seven thousand dollars. The full advantages which the testator expected from these bequests have not been realized, but the character of the motive of the donor is not affected by the failure of the plan. Another donation of one hundred pounds to the town of Boston, the interest of which is annually expended in the purchase of silver medals for the most meritorious pupils in the public schools, has answered its purpose in creating a spirit of emulation; and it is furthermore a memorial “more durable than brass” of the wisdom of him who “owed his first instructions in literature to the free grammar-schools of Boston.”

THE END.









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1859

Franklin, Benjamin  
Benjamin Franklin

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